



Mankato Area Public School's Safe Routes to School Plan

Prepared by
Region Nine Development Commission
For
The Mankato Area Public Schools

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Planning for pedestrian-friendly communities has become both reactive and proactive. Plans must now identify existing infrastructure and policy barriers and also put in place future measures for pedestrian friendly communities. This “Safe Routes to School” (SRTS) plan contains such reactive and proactive measures in ensuring the safety of school children in six elementary schools in the Mankato Area Public School District; Franklin Elementary, Jefferson Elementary, Kennedy Elementary, Roosevelt Elementary, Rosa Parks Elementary, and Washington Elementary.

The goal of a SRTS plan is to instill walking and bicycling habits in school children by putting in place a safe and attractive walking and bicycling environment in and around school areas. The resulting health benefits enjoyed by students as they walk and bike to school makes a SRTS plan like this very convenient in instilling and shaping the right health habits in our school children. The partnership between Mankato Area Public Schools and the City of Mankato, in producing this plan, is aimed at realizing the full benefits of a SRTS plan for the school children and community of Mankato.

Through a consultative process –meetings with partners, parents, teachers and students in these school areas- detailed profiling of these schools were done to identify the existing challenges and opportunities for an effective SRTS planning in and out of the six school areas. Although some infrastructure existed at each school location, it was not adequate enough to ensure the safety of school children as they walk or bike to school. The absence of traffic calming measures, especially on busy roads, and the drop-off of students at undesignated zones were also identified as potential hazards for effective SRTS planning in the school areas. These existing situations formed the basis in the formulation of a vision statement, goals, strategies and projects focused on providing education, encouragement, enforcement, engineering, and evaluation (Five E’s) solutions for safe walking and biking to school.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF SRTS PLAN AND PROFILE OF MANKATO

1.1 Overview

The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program is a national program that promotes walking and biking to school, which was created in Section 1404 of the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users Act (SAFETEA-LU)*. The legislation was signed into law on August 10th, 2005. In 2010 a Continuing Resolution provided more funds for the SRTS program. The funds were distributed to each state based on their school enrollment and were then used by communities and school districts to implement their recommendations through infrastructure and non-infrastructure funds.



The SRTS program focuses on teaching children bicycle and pedestrian safety along with the promotion of healthy lifestyles. The initiative encourages children to walk and bike to school and also seeks to improve the air quality around schools, reduce traffic congestion near schools, increase physical activity of children, and increase community involvement.

Participating Mankato Elementary Schools

- ❖ Franklin Elementary School (K-6)
- ❖ Jefferson Elementary School (K-5)
- ❖ Kennedy Elementary School (K-5)
- ❖ Roosevelt Elementary School (K-5)
- ❖ Rosa Parks Elementary School (K-5)
- ❖ Washington Elementary School (K-5)

See Figure 1.1 of Map

1.2 Organization of the Plan's Content

This plan is structured into four broad areas/chapters –with each chapter representing an area. The first chapter discusses why there is a need to plan for safe routes to school. The chapter also provides a brief profile of Mankato – the city where this plan will be implemented- as well as the city's existing policies in promoting a pedestrian-friendly environment. It narrows the profile further to the specific six school areas.

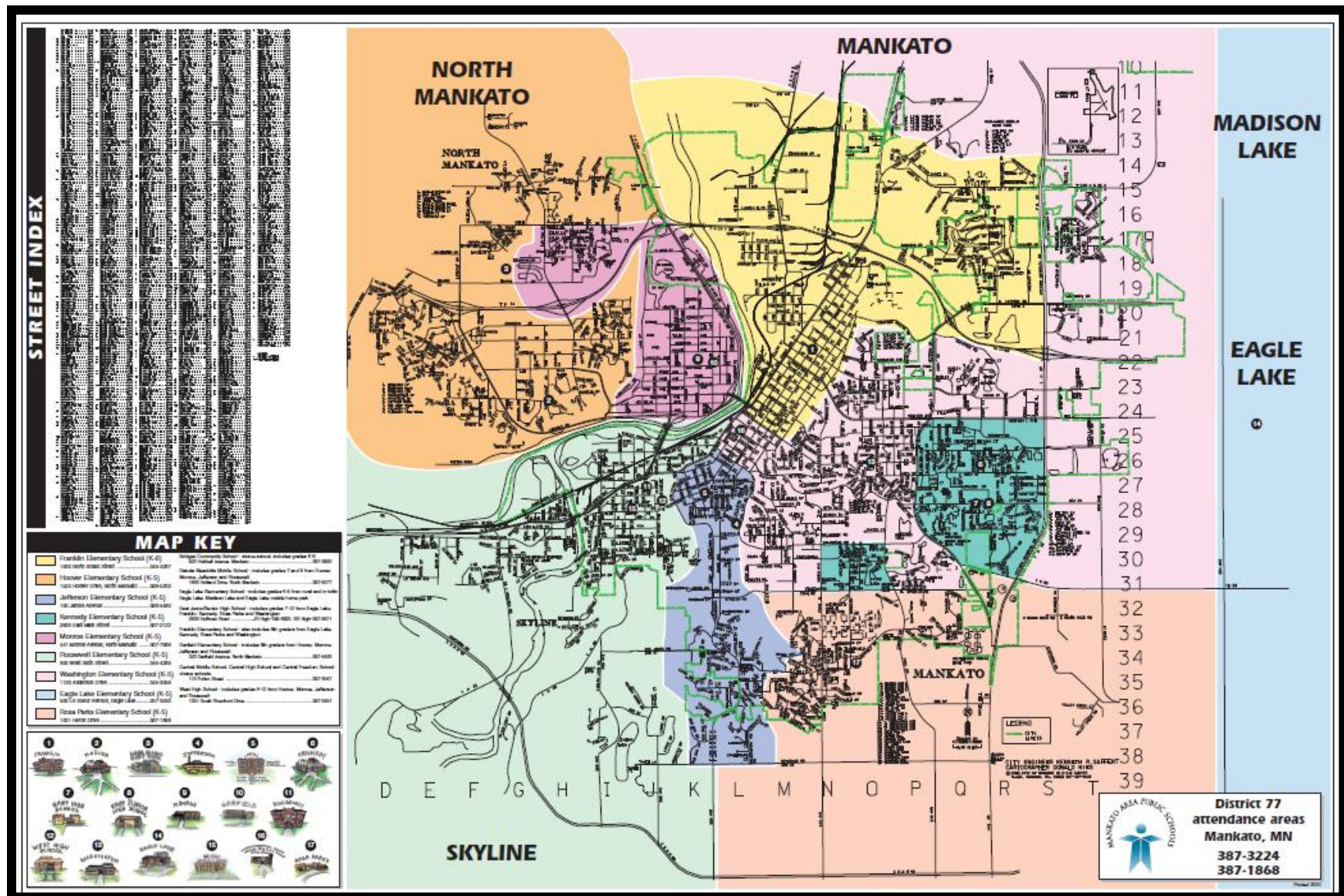
The second provides an overview of the existing conditions in the six school areas as observed during the walking audits. An analysis of data gathered from the survey of students and

parents are also discussed here. It also summarizes the problem areas, barriers and opportunities for SRTS planning within these school areas.

Based on the existing conditions, the third chapter presents recommended improvements that are needed in each school areas for the efficient implementation of the SRTS. Project Planning Matrices (PPMs) were constructed for each school district based on these recommended improvements.

The final chapter, then deals with specific SRTS issues—by formulating a vision statement from which goals and strategies were also developed.

Figure 1.1: Elementary Schools Affected by the SRTS



A copy of this image can be found at: <http://www.rschooltoday.com/school305/FCK/File/transportation/cityattbound10.pdf>

1.3 Profile of Mankato

The City of Mankato is located at the confluence of the Blue Earth and Minnesota Rivers about two hours southwest of Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN. The 2010 census estimated a population of 39,628 within Mankato with a trade area population of 300,000. Mankato is the primary retail center for south-central Minnesota and portions of northern Iowa.



The city has received several recognitions. These include being named a Bicycle Friendly Community and a GreenStep City, as well as being ranked number 25 in the nation as one of “The Best Small Places for Business and Careers” by Forbes.com (June 2012).

Education in the community is a key component of the area’s quality of life and economy. There are several post-secondary opportunities, including Bethany Lutheran College, Minnesota State University, Rasmussen Business College, and South Central College.

To promote the wellness and safety of the community, the City of Mankato has adopted several policies and plans that encourage the wellness and the safety throughout the community.

1.4 Current Policies for Pedestrian-friendly Designs in the Mankato Area

1.4.1 *The City of Mankato’s Complete Streets Policy*

- ❖ The City of Mankato has done a lot of work in their Complete Streets Policy and they are in the process of having it formally adopted. The goal of the Mankato Complete Streets Policy is to improve access and mobility for all users of streets in the community. This involves improving safety through reducing conflict and encouraging non-motorized transportation and transit. The design of new or reconstructed facilities should anticipate expected future demand for bicycling, walking, and transit facilities, and should not preclude the provision of future improvements.
- ❖ A part of the city’s Complete Streets Policy includes a Safe Routes Policy. According to their Safe Routes Policy, “Based on an evaluation of the existing sidewalk and trail

system, it has been determined that additional sidewalk and trail connections are needed to complete the system.” These additional sidewalks and trail connections, deemed critical links, are classified as “Safe Routes to Schools” or “Missing Pedestrian Links.”

1.4.2 The City of Mankato’s Crosswalk Policy

- ❖ Pedestrians, as well as motorists, within the State of Minnesota have rights and responsibilities when traveling along or across roadways. It is important to recognize that all intersections are, by default, legal crosswalks and thereby drivers are required to yield to pedestrians.
- ❖ Marked crosswalks are viewed as “safety devices” and pedestrians have the right of way within them. The crosswalks are repainted every year to ensure proper visibility.

1.4.3 The City of Mankato’s Snow and Ice on Sidewalks City Code

- ❖ The City of Mankato has implemented a Snow and Ice Policy. The policy is enforced to promote safety and connectivity throughout the city.
- ❖ The city has initially identified several SRTS priority one areas for snow removal. Depending on the timing of the snow event and mobilization of plow equipment, the SRTS routes are either plowed as a top priority if mobilized in the early morning or before school begins if the event takes place at night. Currently there are two elementary school zones that have been identified as priority one SRTS plow routes: Roosevelt and Rosa Parks.

1.5 Profile of Mankato Area Public Schools

The Mankato Area Public School District has a total of 17 schools in the Greater Mankato Area. The District employs approximately 500 licensed teachers and about 430 non-licensed staff in the area. The Mankato Area Public School District has a little over 7,500 students serving the cities of Eagle Lake, Madison Lake, Mankato and North Mankato. The district covers 135 miles and extends service to Blue Earth and Nicollet counties.

The school district provides bus transportation to grades K-6 who live at least one and one-half miles away and to grades 7-12 who live at least two miles away. There is no charge for

bus service. All students have access to the breakfast and hot lunch program and a free and reduced lunch program is available.

1.5.1 Mankato Area Public Schools Wellness Policy

- ❖ The District adopted a Wellness Policy in 2006 that affects all of the schools in the district. The purpose of this policy is to “assure a school environment that promotes and protects students’ health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity.” The school board recognizes that nutrition and physical education are essential components of the educational process, that good health fosters student attendance and education, and that healthy eating and physical activity can have a positive impact on student behavior.
- ❖ The school district encourages the involvement of students, parents, teachers, food service staff, and other interested persons in implementing, monitoring, and reviewing school district nutrition and physical activity policies, which is detailed in their Wellness Policy. Children need access to healthy foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive.
- ❖ The school district provides healthy school meal programs that strictly comply with all federal, state, and local statutes and regulations. Opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons, when appropriate. The school district recognizes that parents and guardians have a primary and fundamental role in promoting and protecting their children’s health and well-being. Currently there are no guidelines, policies, or promotion of a Safe Routes to School Program in the Wellness Policy.

1.5.2 Partnership in Policies

Taking into consideration both the school district’s Wellness Policy and the City of Mankato’s Complete Streets Policy, we see a close tie in the interests and desires of seeing the Safe Routes to School planning process become effective.

1.6 Partnerships

1.6.1 Key Stakeholders

- i. Mankato Area Public Schools:* The school district was the leader and champion of the Safe Routes to School effort in the area. The district encompassed a four-city (Mankato, North Mankato, Madison Lake and Eagle Lake), two-county (Blue Earth and Nicollet) area. Within the district's boundaries there are eleven elementary schools, two middle schools, and four high schools. This plan focused on the six elementary schools that are located within the Mankato city limits (Franklin, Jefferson, Kennedy, Roosevelt, Rosa Parks, and Washington).
- ii. City of Mankato:* The city was supportive of the Safe Routes to School effort because they were in the process of adopting a Complete Streets Policy. As mentioned earlier, the Safe Routes Policy is included in the city's Complete Streets Policy. The timing of the Mankato Area Public Schools application fit very well into the City of Mankato's desire to continue to improve access and mobility for all users of streets in the community by improving safety through reducing conflict and encouraging non-motorized transportation. City engineering, information technology, and public safety staff provided pertinent data and knowledge about the travel patterns and accident zones. Having this knowledge aided in identifying problem areas.

1.6.2 Other Local Stakeholders

Other key representatives included Region Nine Development Commission, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, and the Greater Mankato Bike and Walk Advocates. Region Nine Development Commission worked with local officials to complete the Mankato Area Public School's Safe Routes to School plan. Input from the following people and agencies was invaluable.

- ❖ Blue Earth County
- ❖ YMCA
- ❖ Neighborhood Association
- ❖ Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

Having representatives from varying backgrounds brought knowledge that was key to the SRTS planning process.

CHAPTER TWO

EXISTING CONDITIONS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the present state of the six elementary school areas. Based on these existing conditions the chapter provides a summary of the walkability situation in these schools, barriers and opportunities for SRTS, and critical concerns that stakeholders documented.

2.2 Pedestrian and Bike Accidents in School Walking Catchment Areas

Table 2.1 below shows a summary of pedestrian and bicycle accidents at each of the six schools over a ten year period of time (2002 to 2012). As you can see from this data some of the schools appear well-positioned for walking and bicycling while others will need to work on making their walking zones more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

**Table 2.1: Pedestrian and Bike Accidents in School Walking Catchment Areas
(2002 to 2012)**

School Area	Recorded Accidents (2002 – 2012)
Franklin School Area	31
Jefferson School Area	9
Kennedy School Area	10
Roosevelt School Area	2
Rosa Parks School Area	4
Washington School Area	20

2.3 Existing Conditions of School Areas

2.3.1 Franklin Elementary School (serves grades K-6)

Franklin is a large K-6 elementary school with an enrollment population of about 696 students. About 76.4% of the population is white, 14.6% of the population is black, 3.9% of the population is Hispanic, 3.7% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1.4% American Indian/Alaskan Native. Franklin has 47 licensed teachers on staff. Approximately, 54% of the staff on campus has obtained a master's degree and 43% of the staff on campus has obtained a bachelor's degree and the remaining 3% represents other licensed professionals and support staff. The school day starts at 8:10 a.m. and ends at 2:40 p.m. No students are allowed in the building before 7:40 a.m. or after 2:50 p.m.

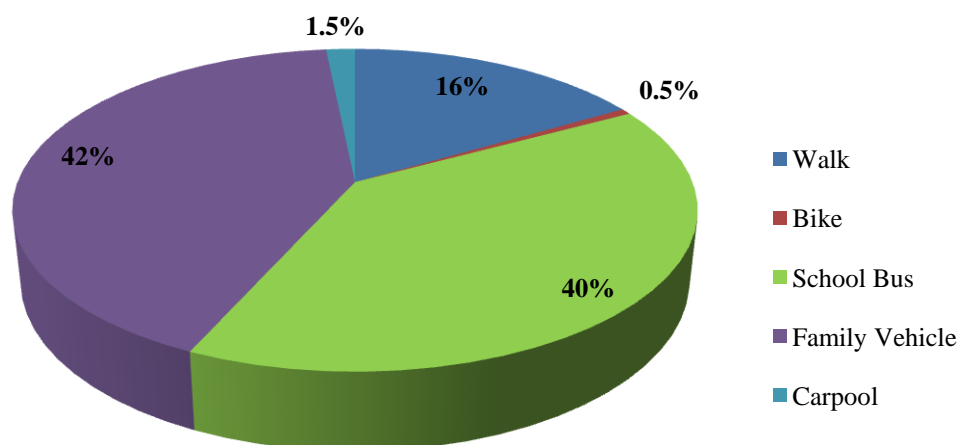
A. Student Survey Results

Approximately 42% of the Franklin students are riding in a family vehicle to school while about 40% are riding the school bus and 18% of the student population is walking and biking (Table 2.2 and Figure 2.1).

Table 2.2: Franklin Student Tally Data (Fall, 2012)

Number of Students	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Public Transit	Other
682	113	4	270	284	11	0	0

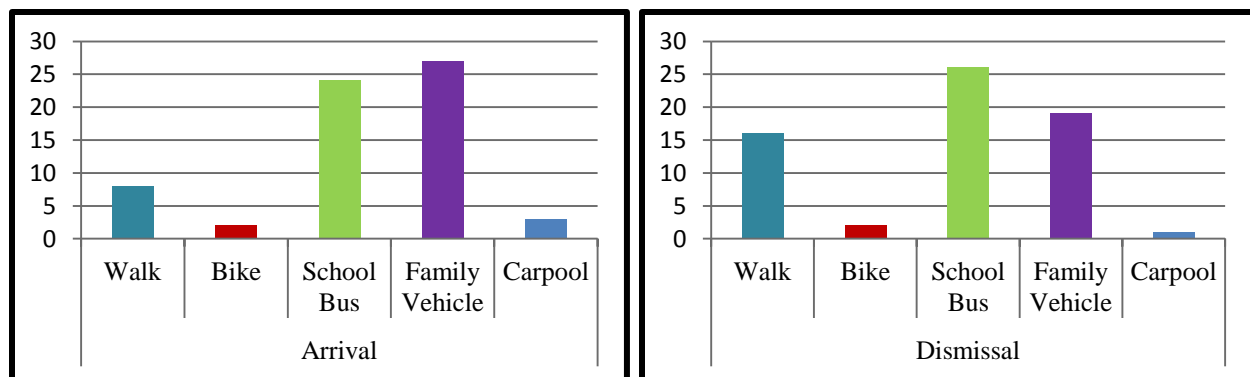
Figure 2.1: Franklin Student Tally Data (Fall, 2012)



B. Parent Survey Results:

The primary issue that Franklin parents indicated in the survey was the distance that their student would have to walk to get to and from Franklin Elementary. According to the parent survey, approximately 35% of the students live more than two miles away from the Franklin campus. It is important to note that some of Franklin students travel greater distances because the school serves all of the sixth grade students who live on the eastern side of Mankato Area Public School's service district. About 50% of these students would be willing to walk up to ten minutes to get to and from Franklin Elementary.

Figure 2.2: Franklin Parent Survey Results (Fall, 2012)



C. Existing Conditions:

i. *Current Infrastructure:* Franklin Elementary has a crossing guard at the intersection of N. Broad Street and Lime Street before school and one located at N. Broad Street and Lafayette Street after school. There is another crossing guard at the intersection of N. Broad Street and N. 4th Street before and after school. Crossing guards are on duty from 7:45 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. – 3:10 p.m. Each day four teachers are on duty from 7:40 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. patrolling the Lafayette side, the office entrance, the playground and watching the school halls. For safety reasons children below grade two are not encouraged to ride bicycles to school. The bike racks are located on the N. 2nd Street side of the campus.

ii. *Parent Pick-up and Drop-off location:* North Second Street serves as the primary pick-up and drop-off location for parents. The street gets very congested in the morning and afternoon arrival and dismissal periods. Several vehicles would double park, others were

facing the wrong way, and some vehicles would make U-turns in the middle of the street (Figure 2.3a). A couple of students would exit their vehicle on the opposite side of N. Second street and try to cross through on-coming traffic. The four-way stop at the intersection of East Lafayette Street and North Second Street would congest and as a result the pedestrian crossings were disregarded during peak periods of traffic (Figure 2.3b). Lime Street on the other side of the school is underutilized as a pick-up and drop-off location.

Figure 2.3a: Disregard of Pedestrian Crossings



Figure 2.3b: U-turns in the Middle of Street



iii. *Bus System:* About five buses and three special education buses provide transportation to the students at Franklin Elementary. The buses drop off and pick up along East Lafayette Street. In the morning the buses dropped students off before 7:40 a.m. and they picked students up at 2:40 p.m. One of the bus drivers mentioned that it is very difficult to maneuver around the school campus and the immediate neighborhoods because of the heavy vehicle congestion.

iv. *Neighborhood Audit:* There are primarily residential neighborhoods surrounding Franklin Elementary. To the northwest is N. Riverfront Drive and to the southwest is Madison Avenue. Both of these streets are large collectors that are heavily used throughout the day. To avoid turning into the heavy traffic on the collectors, several parents would use the

alley off of Adams Street to loop around back into the neighborhoods. The sidewalks surrounding the school were in good condition. In the neighborhoods, the sidewalks were smaller and older. To improve the connectivity of the neighborhood, curb extensions are needed at the intersection of Lime Street and N. 4th Street, at the intersection of Lime Street and Broad Street and at the intersection of Lafayette Street and Broad Street in an effort to encourage walkers from the neighborhoods.

Figure 2.4: Franklin Elementary School Area

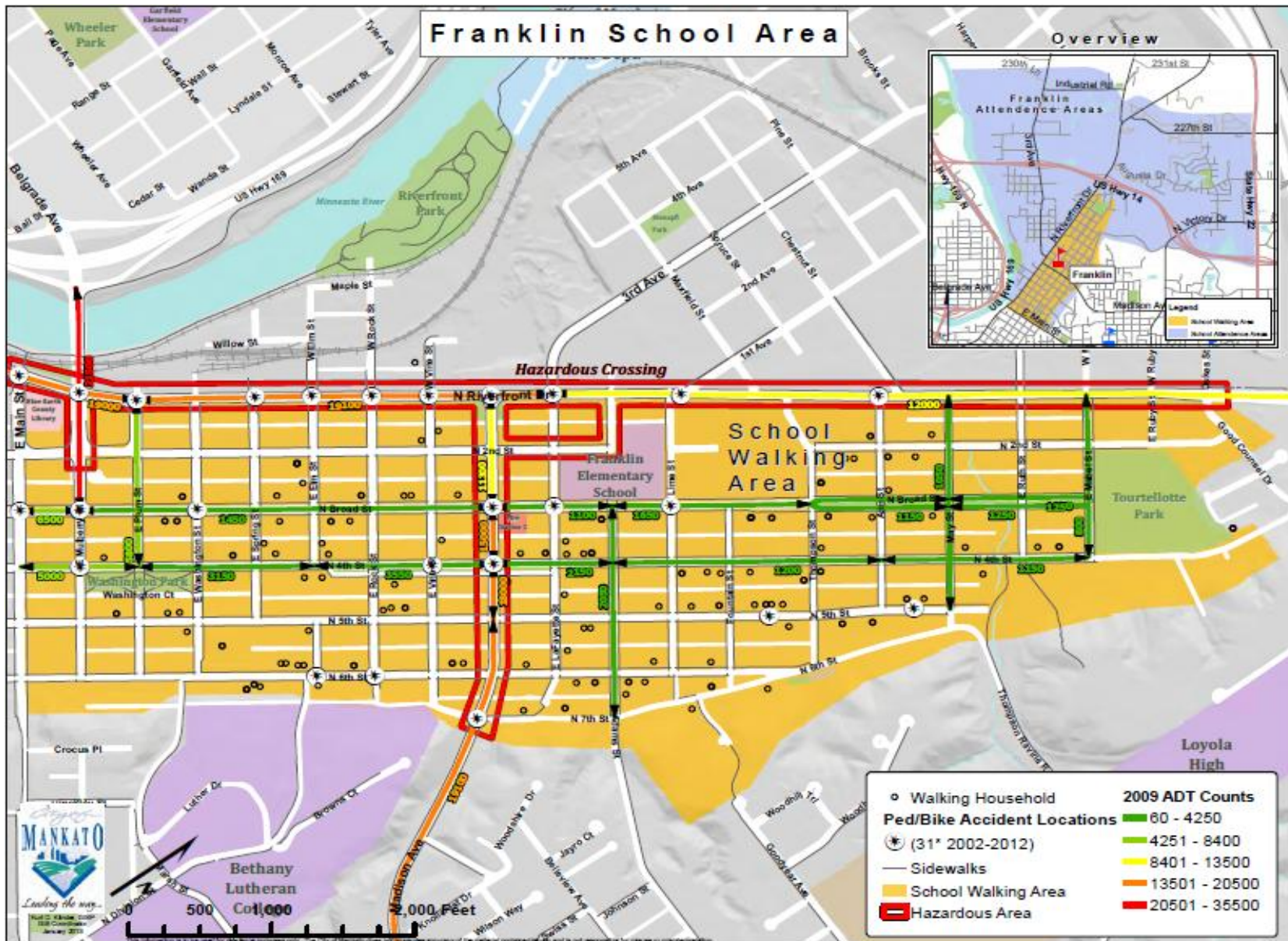
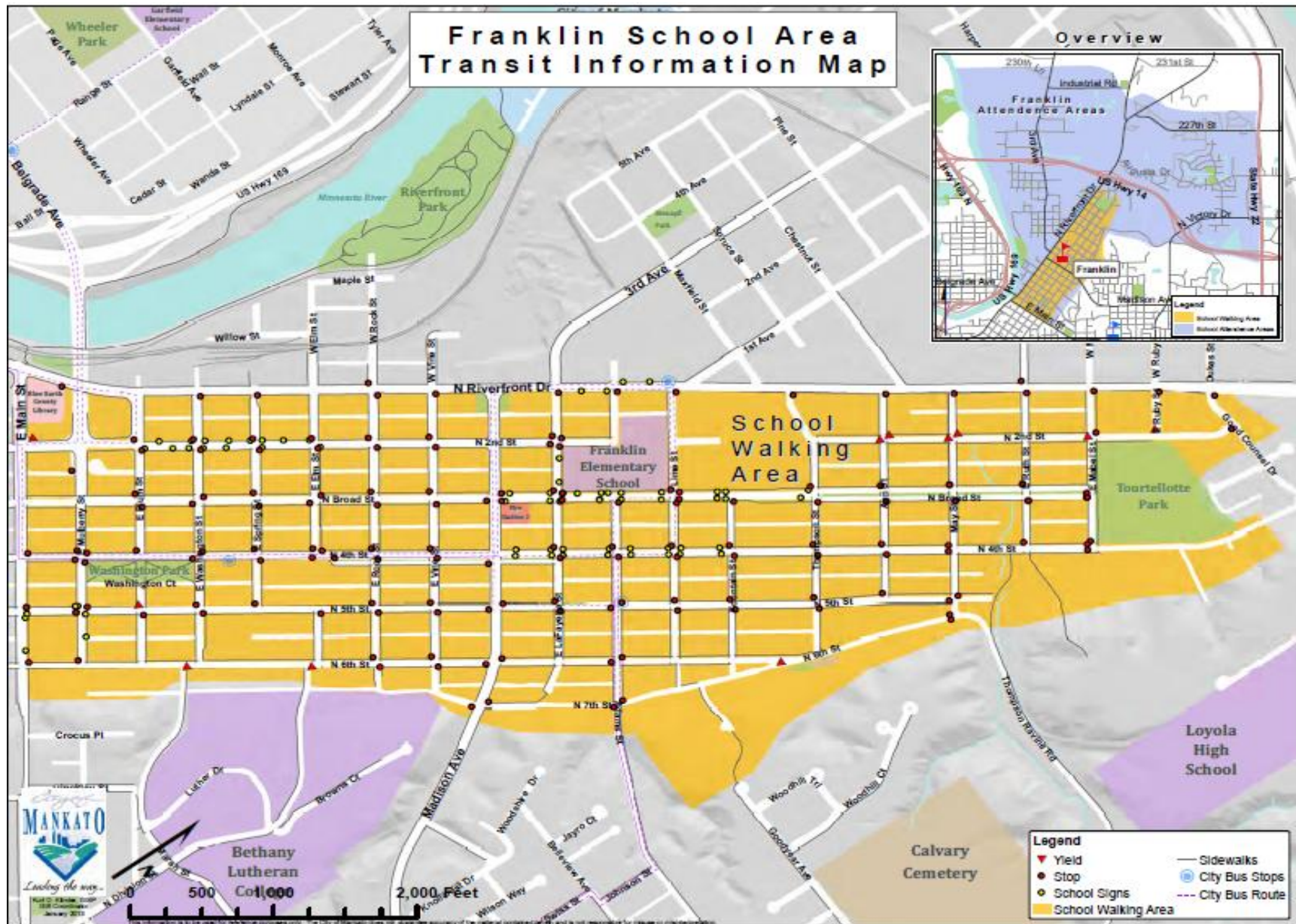


Figure 2.5: Franklin Elementary Transit Information



2.3.2 Jefferson Elementary School (serves grades K-5)

Jefferson is a smaller K-5 elementary school with an enrollment population of about 242 students. About 77% of the population is white, 15% of the population is black, about 4% of the population is Hispanic, 3.2% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.4% American Indian/Alaskan Native. Jefferson has 14 licensed teachers on staff. Approximately, 45% of the staff on campus has obtained a master's degree and 48% of the staff on campus has obtained a bachelor's degree and the remaining 7% represents other licensed professionals and support staff. The school day starts at 8:05 a.m. and ends at 2:45 p.m. No students are allowed in the building before 7:50 a.m. or after 3:00 p.m.

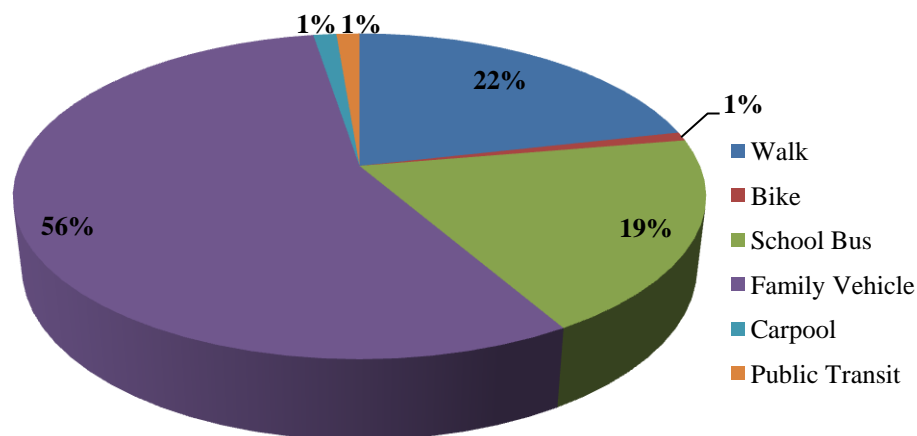
A. Student Survey Results:

Approximately 56% of the Jefferson students are riding in a family vehicle to school while only about 19% are riding the school bus and 22% of the student population is walking and biking (Table 2.3 and Figure 2.5).

Table 2.3: Jefferson Student Tally Data (Fall, 2012)

Number of Students	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Public Transit	Other
233	50	2	45	130	3	3	0

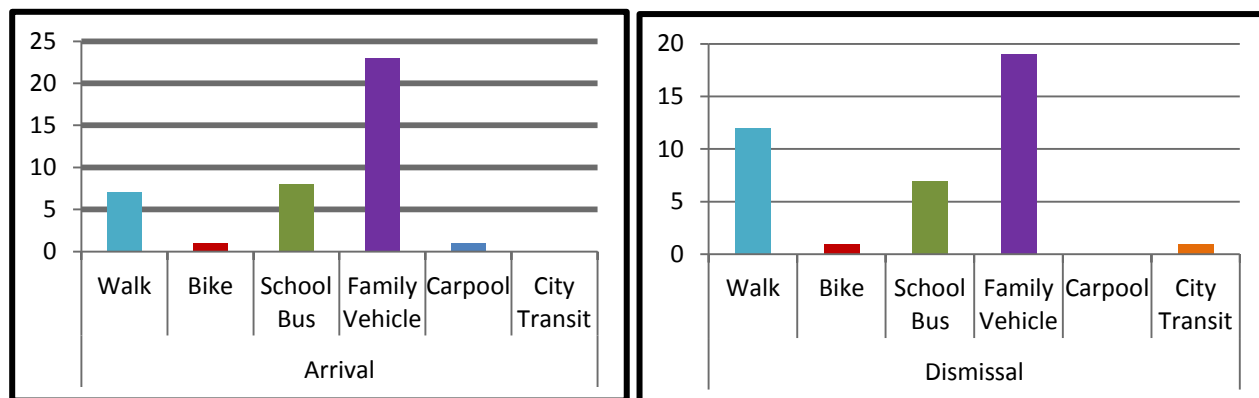
Figure 2.6: Jefferson Student Tally Data (Fall, 2012)



B. Parent Survey Results:

The primary issue that Jefferson parents have indicated in the survey is the safety of the street crossings. In particular, they were concerned about the younger age children being capable of crossing streets by themselves. Approximately 58% of the Jefferson parents said that if the safety of crossings and intersections were improved they would probably let their children walk or bike to school.

Figure 2.7: Jefferson Parent Survey Results (Fall, 2012)



C. Existing Conditions:

- i. *Current Infrastructure:* Jefferson Elementary has no crossing guards within the walking catchment area. Adult supervision is provided daily beginning at 7:50 a.m. and ending at 3:00 p.m. Students in grades K-2 enter the door at the bottom of the stairs near the north parking lot, and students in grades 3-5 enter the south door. Students line up and wait for the teacher on duty to signal them into the school. Upon dismissal, students walk with their teachers to the front door, where the students are instructed to form a line on the sidewalk while waiting for the buses to arrive. Jefferson has one bike rack located near the main entrance by the dumpsters Figure 2.7. There are no noted painted bike routes in the area.

Figure 2.8: Bike rack location



ii. *Parent Pick-Up and Drop-Off Location:* The north lot primarily serves as the pick-up and drop-off location for buses and the pick-up and drop-off area for parents. This parking lot gets especially congested during daily dismissal. Several parents double park and wait for their student to walk out to the family vehicle. The buses had very limited maneuverability around all the double parked cars and several cars were parked in the designated bus zone (Figure 2.8). In the south lot there are many drop-offs in the morning but very few pick-ups in the afternoon. The south lot primarily serves as a staff parking lot.

Figure 2.9: Cars parked in designated bus zone



iii. *Bus System:* Two buses provide transportation to the students at Jefferson Elementary. One of the buses provides transportation to an after school program at the local YMCA, and the other bus takes students to the southern area of the bussing district. The buses arrived at 2:50 p.m. and the parking lot was cleared out by 3:00 p.m.

iv. *Neighborhood Audit:* The neighborhoods surrounding Jefferson Elementary have great pedestrian connectivity. There are many large sidewalks on either side of most streets, and large trees offer substantial protection for pedestrians. After conducting a walking audit of the surrounding Jefferson neighborhoods, some walkability improvements have been noted. Currently there are no curb cuts or pedestrian ramps at the intersections of; Byron Street and E. Lewis Street, Center Street and E. Pleasant Street, and Center Street and Lincoln Street.

The local neighborhoods are older, and as a result there are tree root systems uplifting sidewalks which affect the overall connectivity of the sidewalk network (Figure 2.9). A two-way intersection is located at James Avenue and Fairfield Street. Traffic is typically fast on James Avenue in part due to college apartments and townhomes being located on the south side of James Avenue. These apartment complexes and townhomes result in increases in traffic volume and speeds on James Avenue when Minnesota State University, Mankato is in session. A proposed four-way stop at James Avenue and Fairfield Street could help improve and increase the pedestrian awareness at the intersection.

Figure 2.10: Sidewalk in Jefferson Elementary neighborhood



Figure 2.11: Jefferson Elementary School Area

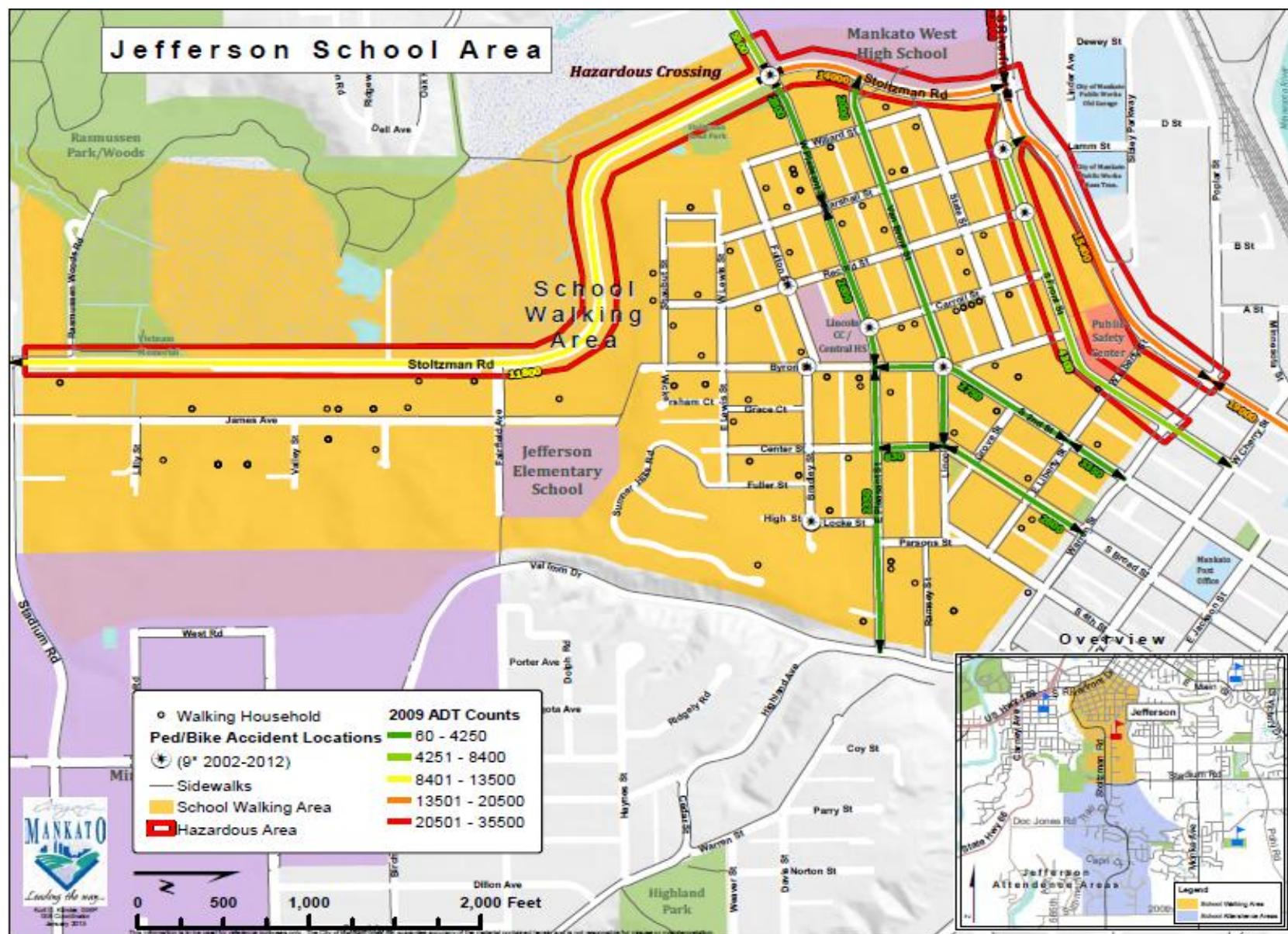
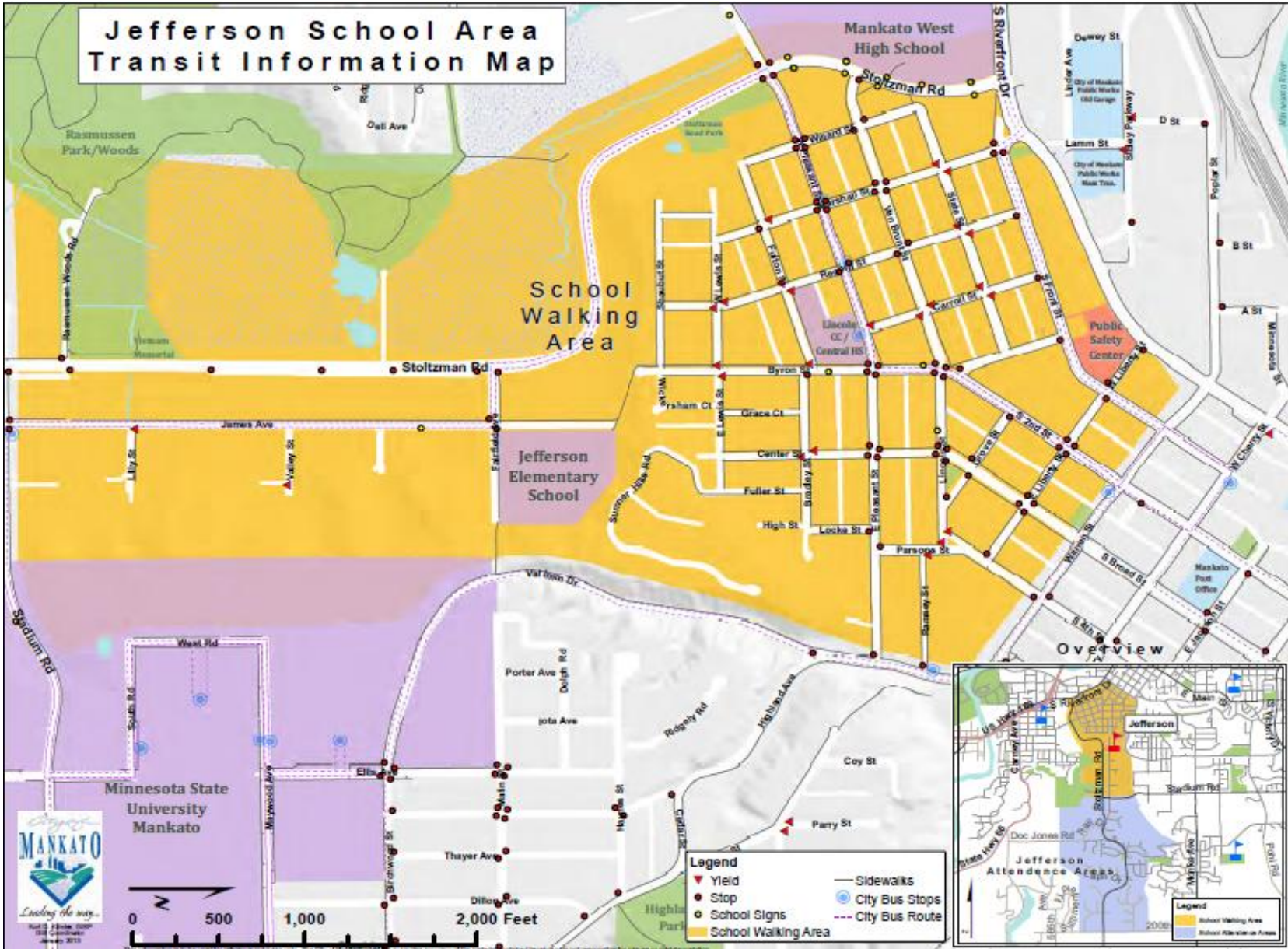


Figure 2.12: Jefferson Elementary Transit Information



2.3.3 Kennedy Elementary School (serves grades K-5)

Kennedy Elementary is a K-5 school with an enrollment population of 489 students. About 64% of the population is white, about 23% of the population is black, about 6% of the population is Hispanic, 4.6% of the population is Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.8% of the population is American Indian/Alaskan Native. Kennedy has 28 licensed teachers on staff. Approximately 49% of the staff on campus has obtained a master's degree and 47% of the staff on campus has obtained a bachelor's degree and the remaining 4% represents other licensed professionals and support staff.

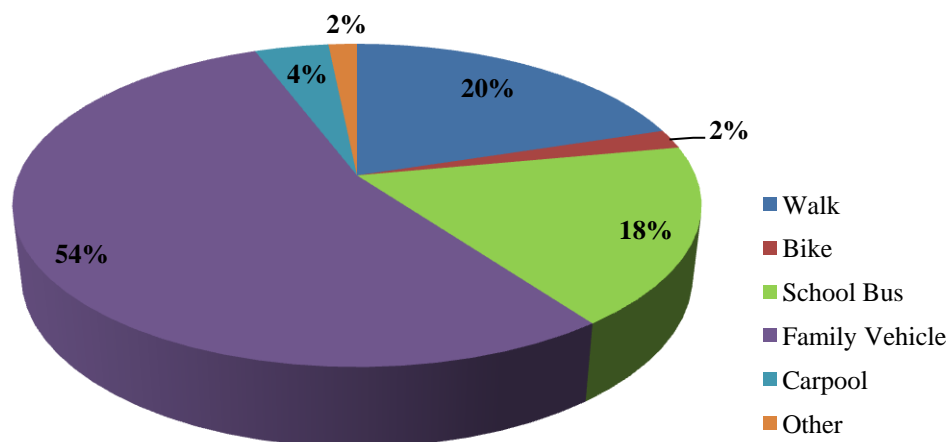
A. Student Survey Results:

Approximately 54% of the Kennedy students are riding in a family vehicle to school while only about 18% are riding the school bus and 22% of the student population is walking and biking (Table 2.4 and Figure 2.10).

Table 2.4: Kennedy Student Tally Data (Fall, 2012)

Number of Students	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Public Transit	Other
313	63	6	56	170	13	0	5

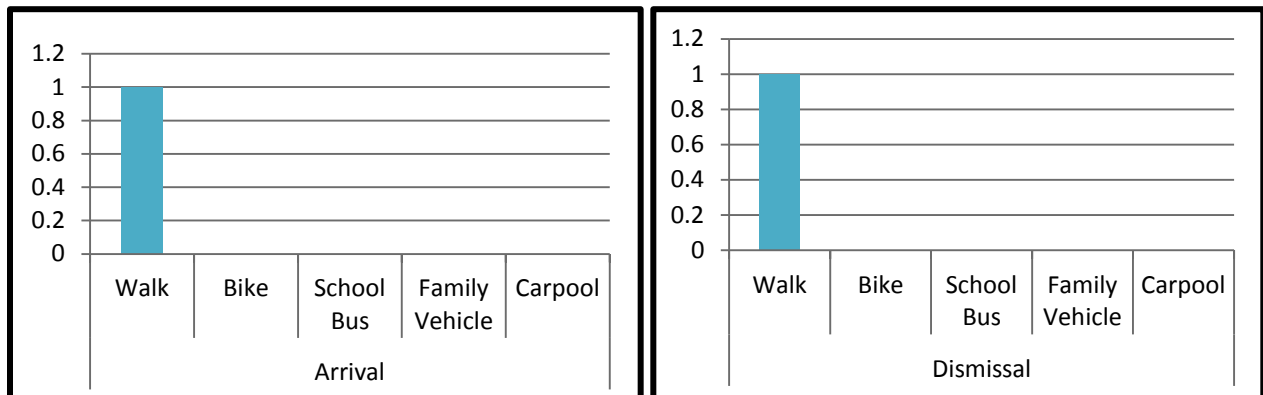
Figure 2.13: Kennedy Student Tally Data (Fall, 2012)



B. Parent Survey Results:

Only one parent responded from Kennedy elementary and their second grade child already walks to and from school.

Figure 2.14: Kennedy Parent Survey Results (Fall, 2012)



C. Existing Conditions:

- i. *Current Infrastructure:* There are two bike racks on campus; one is located on the east side of the school and another one is on the west side of the school. There are no crossing guards on duty during the arrival, but there is designated staff outside during dismissal at the intersection of Kennedy Street and E. Main Street (Figure 2.12). Four teachers are on morning hall and outside duty from 7:40 a.m. to 7:55 a.m. each morning.

Figure 2.15: Designated staff at the intersection of Kennedy Street and E. Main Street



- ii. *Parent Pick-up and Drop-off Location:* Kennedy Street serves as the main pick-up and drop-off site for both the parents and the buses. Several parents are parking on the west side of Kennedy Street and having their students cross mid-block through the bus loop to get to the front entrance of the school. Several cars made illegal U-turns in the middle of Kennedy Street. Kennedy Street has designated parent drop-off and pick-up locations for parents located outside of the bus loop. Only two parents were noted using these designated locations.
- iii. *Bus System:* Two small buses and one large bus transport Kennedy students. Only about 50 students use the bus as their primary mode of transportation. Buses use the loop on the west side of the school located on Kennedy Street as a pick-up and drop-off location (Figure 2.13). Several parents used the designated bus loop to drop-off and pick-up students.

Figure 2.16: Buses using the loop off of Kennedy Street as a pick-up and drop-off location



- iv. *Neighborhood Audit:* The neighborhoods surrounding Kennedy Elementary are primarily residential. The sidewalk network has some connectivity issues. There is no sidewalk on the south side of Hoffman Road, which is a minor arterial road (Figure 14a). Hoffman is a four lane road that already has a signalized pedestrian crossing, but because Hoffman Road only has one sidewalk, the crossing is not being used to its full potential (Figure 14b). In the future, it is important that the city of Mankato and the school district work together to find key sidewalk links missing along Hoffmann Road in order to promote the safety of students crossing the busy minor arterial. Another neighborhood connectivity

issue is a missing sidewalk link on the west side of Kennedy Street. There are designated ten minute parking stalls off of Kennedy Street. Some parents used these stalls to reverse back onto Kennedy Street, which created a significant amount of congestion during arrival and dismissal hours. The school zone signage is well marked throughout the neighborhood. The drivers appear to be cautious and pedestrian friendly.

Figure 2.17a: Minor arterial road at Hoffman Road Figure 2.17b: Hoffman Road



Figure 2.18: Kennedy Elementary School Area

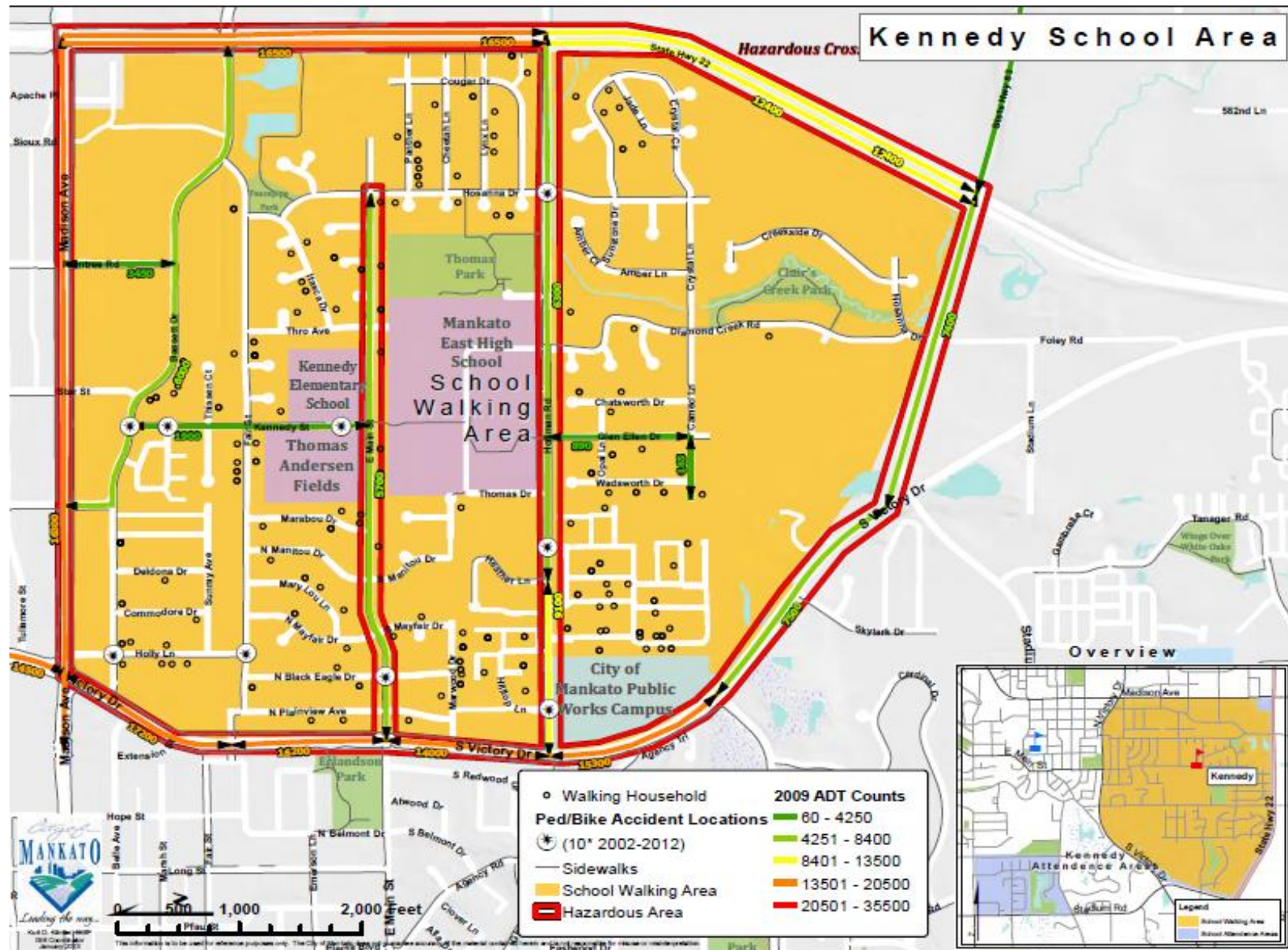
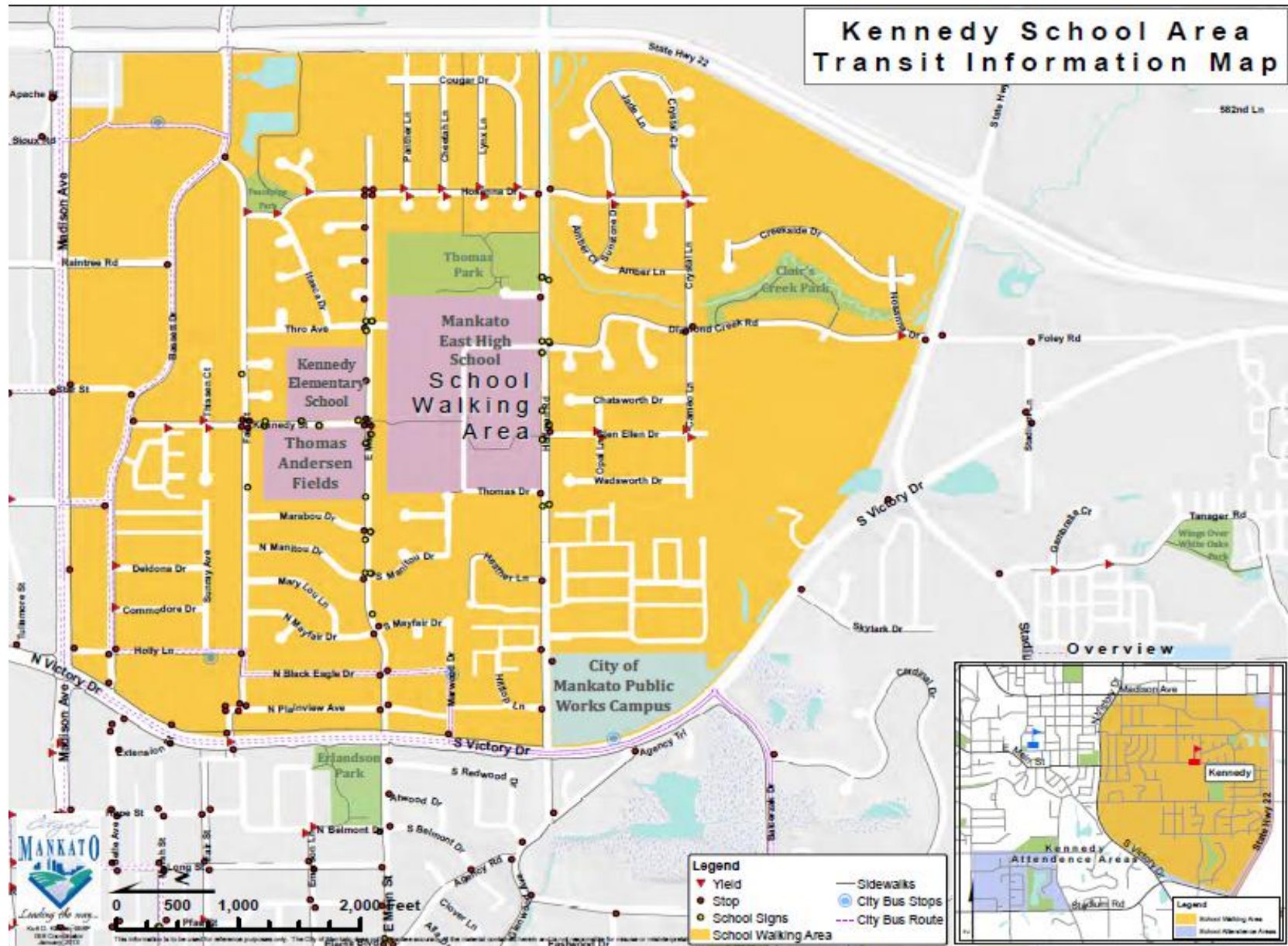


Figure 2.19: Kennedy Elementary Transit Information



2.3.4 Roosevelt Elementary School (serves grades K-5)

Roosevelt Elementary is a K-5 school with an enrollment population of 382. About 91% of the population is white, 4% of the population is black, about 2% of the population is Hispanic, 1.4% of the population is Asian/Pacific Islander. Roosevelt has 22 licensed teachers on staff. Approximately 58% of the staff has obtained a master's degree and 37% of the staff has a bachelor's degree and the remaining 5% represents other licensed professionals and support staff. The school day starts at 8:15 a.m. and ends at 2:45 p.m. A staff member is outside daily to supervise at 7:35 a.m. and the teachers are outside at 7:50 a.m.

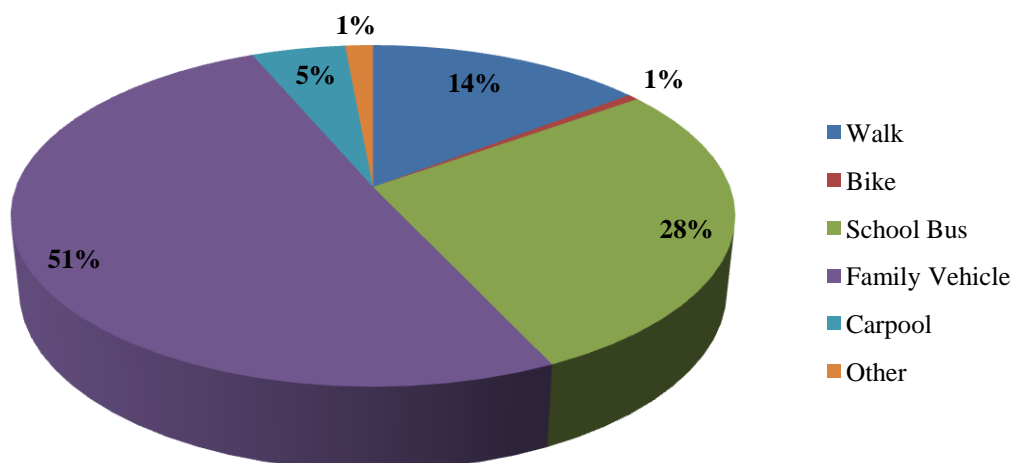
A. Student Survey Results:

Approximately 51% of the Roosevelt students are riding in a family vehicle to school while only about 28% are riding the school bus and 15% of the student population is walking and biking (Table 2.5 and Figure 2.15).

Table 2.5: Roosevelt Student Tally Data (Fall, 2012)

Number of Students	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Public Transit	Other
344	50	2	96	174	17	0	5

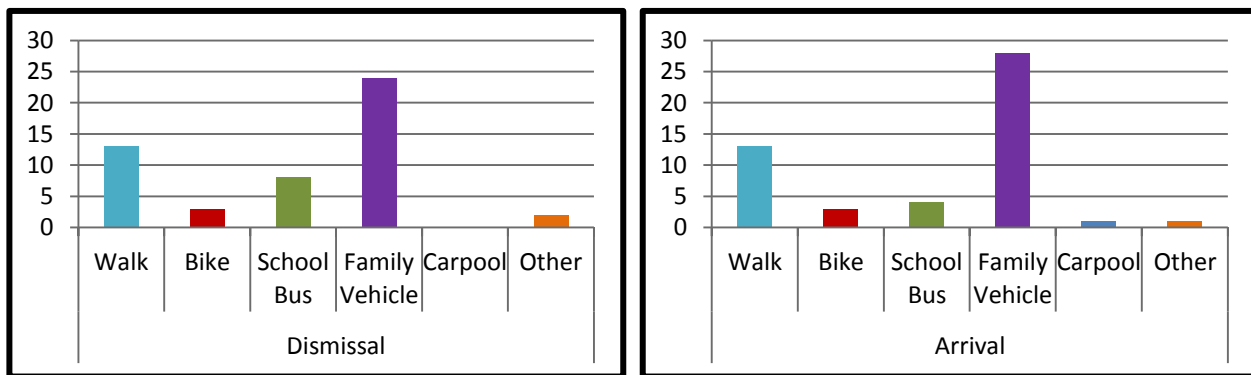
Figure 2.20: Roosevelt Student Tally Data (Fall, 2012)



B. Parent Survey Results:

The primary issue that Roosevelt parents have indicated in the survey is the safety of the street crossings and intersections. Approximately 55% of the parents said that if the safety of the crossings and intersections were to be improved, they would probably let their children walk or bike to school. Over 70% of the parents responded that they would feel comfortable letting their children walk or bike to school if they were accompanied by a responsible adult.

Figure 2.21: Roosevelt Parent Survey Results (Fall, 2012)



C. Existing Conditions:

- i. *Current Infrastructure:* Roosevelt has not had any crossing guards in their walking catchment area for the past two years and there is no after school supervision of students. Grades K-2 are encouraged not to bike to school. There is one bike rack located on the side where grades 3-5 are dropped off. An estimation of about 15 bikes are using the bike rack during the warmer months of the year. Students who are in grades K-2 get dropped off on W. 5th Street and students who are in grades 3-5 get dropped off on W. 6th Street.
- ii. *Parent Pick-up and Drop-off Location:* The main street that parents use as a pick-up and drop-off location is W. 5th Street (Figure 2.17). On the W. 5th side of Roosevelt there are no school zone signs encouraging pedestrian awareness. During dismissal several parents park and wait for their students on W. 5th Street and Hubbell Avenue. Owatonna Street is underutilized as a parent pick-up and drop-off location.

Figure 2.22: Parents using the W. 5th Street as the main pick-up and drop-off location



iii. *Bus System:* Two large buses transport about 100 Roosevelt students. They drop the students off early, around 7:35 a.m., on W. 6th Street. The early arrival of the buses helps reduce the congestion of the parent drop-offs in the morning (Figure 2.18).

Figure 2.23: Early buses dropping off Roosevelt students



iv. *Neighborhood Audit:* The neighborhoods surrounding Roosevelt are connected by the Minneopa and West Mankato Trails. The recently reconstructed Carney Avenue is used as a main thoroughfare through the Roosevelt neighborhoods and is heavily traveled by pedestrians. Both sides of Sibley Street and S. Riverfront Drive have sidewalks and they both have well marked crosswalks. Sibley Street is a state trunk highway that becomes a

part of State Highway 66. Hubbell Avenue and Blue Earth Street have painted crosswalks but have no ADA accessible ramps.

The intersection of S. Riverfront Drive and Sibley Street is heavily traveled by fast moving traffic. S. Riverfront Drive is very difficult street to cross because it is a four-lane street. While the initial Safe Routes to School effort focused on the Mankato Area Public Schools, Bridges Community Elementary School, located near Roosevelt, identified the intense congestion at Hubbell Avenue and 7th Street. Bridges also identified 8:00 a.m. to 8:15 a.m. as one of the peak traffic times because parents are running late dropping students off and trying to get to work. Roosevelt is close to Mankato West High School, the local YWCA, The Risen Savior Lutheran School, and Bridges which adds to the pedestrian and traffic volume and speeds of traffic in the neighborhood.

Figure 2.24: Roosevelt Elementary School Area

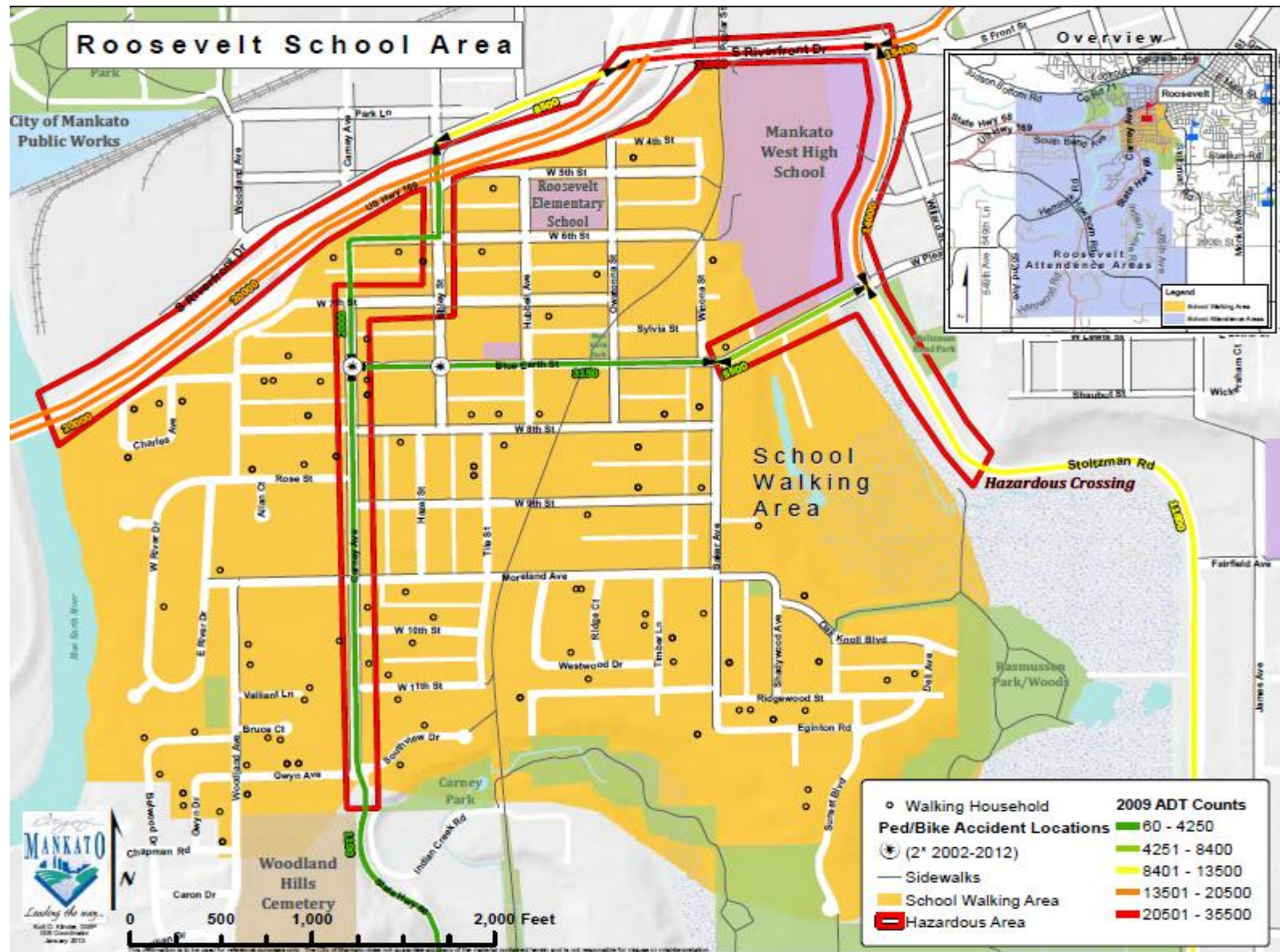
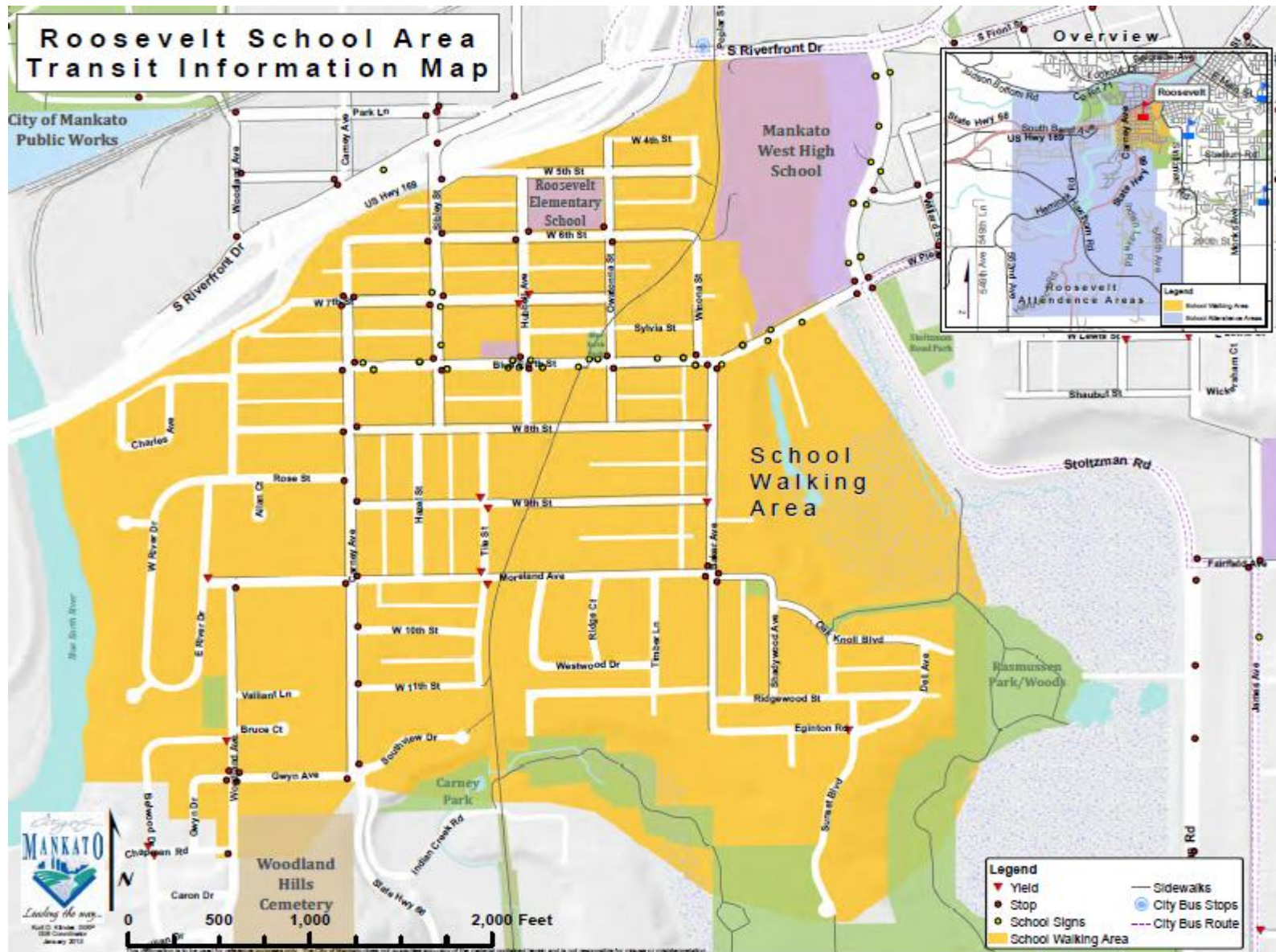


Figure 2.25: Roosevelt Elementary Transit Information



2.3.5 Rosa Parks Elementary School (serves grades K-5)

Rosa Parks is a K-5 school with an enrollment population of 413. About 85% of the population is white, 6% of the population is black, about 5% of the population is Hispanic, 1.8% of the population Asian/Pacific Islander. Rosa Parks has 23 licensed teachers on staff. Approximately 53% of the staff on campus has obtained a master's degree and 37% of the staff has obtained a bachelor's degree and the remaining 16% represents other licensed professionals and support staff. The school day starts at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 2:30 p.m.

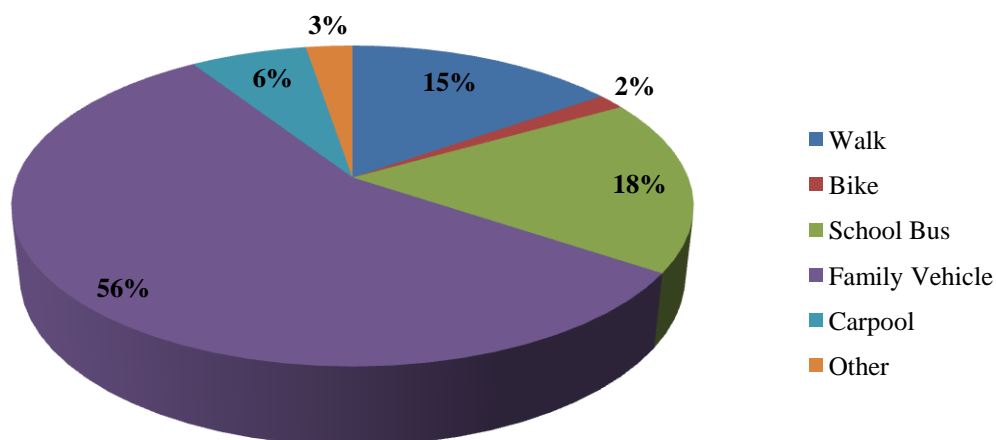
A. Student Survey Results:

Approximately 56% of the Rosa Parks students are riding in a family vehicle to school while only about 18% are riding the school bus and 17% of the student population is walking and biking (Table 2.6 and Figure 2.19).

Table 2.6: Rosa Parks Student Tally Data (Fall, 2012)

Number of Students	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Public Transit	Other
381	58	6	67	215	25	0	10

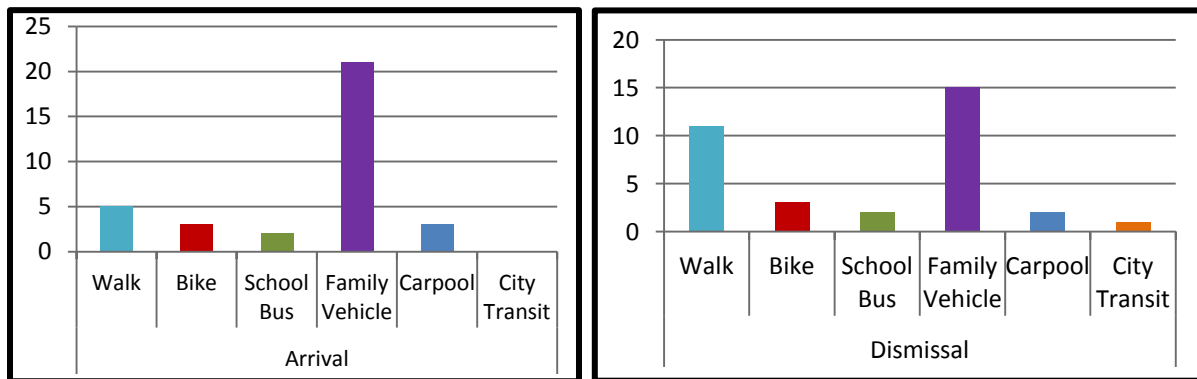
Figure 2.26: Rosa Parks Student Tally Data (Fall, 2012)



B. Parent Survey Results:

The primary issue that Rosa Parks parents indicated was the safety of the street crossings and intersections. Approximately 71% of the parents said that if the safety of crossings and intersections were to be improved they would probably let their children walk or bike to school. About 80% of the parents said that their children are willing to walk up to 20 minutes to get to and from school.

Figure 2.27: Rosa Parks Parent Survey Results (Fall, 2012)



C. Existing Conditions:

- i. *Current Infrastructure:* Currently there are no crossing guards in the Rosa Parks walking catchment area. There are three walking school buses that are active throughout the year. The walking school bus drivers' pick-up and drop-off in the upper lot near the entrance (Figure 2.21). Staff park in the upper lot and the parents are discouraged from dropping their students off in the upper lot to reduce the traffic congestion for the buses and walkers. Adult supervision is provided daily beginning at 7:50 a.m. and ending at 3:00 p.m.

There are three large bike racks and one small bike rack located on the Rosa Parks campus. During the warmer months most of the racks are filled. All of the bike racks are located around the playground near the lower lot. The connectivity of the upper and lower parking lots are controlled by a gate. The gate is opened during the winter to allow for snow removal. Several students and parents climb the hill between the upper and lower lots.

Figure 2.28: Pick-up and drop-off point in the upper lot of Rosa Parks



iii. Parent Pick-up and Drop-off Location: Parents have a designated lower lot located off of Heron Drive that is used for pick up and drop offs. It is designed as a car loop (Figure 2.22). Parents were lined up very early (up to one hour for some parents) in anticipation for dismissal; about 40 vehicles were in line waiting for students. Several parents were sleeping, reading, or talking on a cell phone. Three teachers and one police officer were helping students get to parent vehicles. About ten vehicles were allowed to pick up their students at one time. Two parents were seen dropping students off on Timberwolf Drive instead of using the designated car loop.

Figure 2.29: Designated parents' parking lot for pick ups and drop offs at Rosa Parks



iv. Bus System: Two large buses and two special education buses transport Rosa Parks students. Only about 70 students use the bus as their primary mode of transportation. Buses pick up and drop off in the upper lot located off of Timberwolf Drive. The buses are not utilizing the designated bus painted zones in the upper lot (Figure 2.23).

Figure 2.30: Bus drivers were not using the designated bus zone in the upper lot



v. *Neighborhood Audit:* The neighborhoods near Rosa Parks are newly developed. They have large sidewalks that appeared to be well maintained. The traffic is attentive to walking students and obeys the speed limits. Currently there is mid-block pedestrian signal crossing on Monks Avenue (CSAH 8) that is intended to help students cross the busy road. There are signs reserving spaces for carpoolers and for green vehicles. Located adjacent to the Rosa Parks campus is a large gated college student complex called College Town. College Town residents are not allowed to access Timberwolf Drive during the morning hours while students are walking to school. Any residents wishing to exit the complex in the morning must exit onto Heron Drive and proceed to the four-way stop at the intersection of Heron Drive and Timberwolf Drive. This accommodation was an effort to promote Safe Routes to School in the area.

Figure 2.31: Rosa Parks Elementary School Area

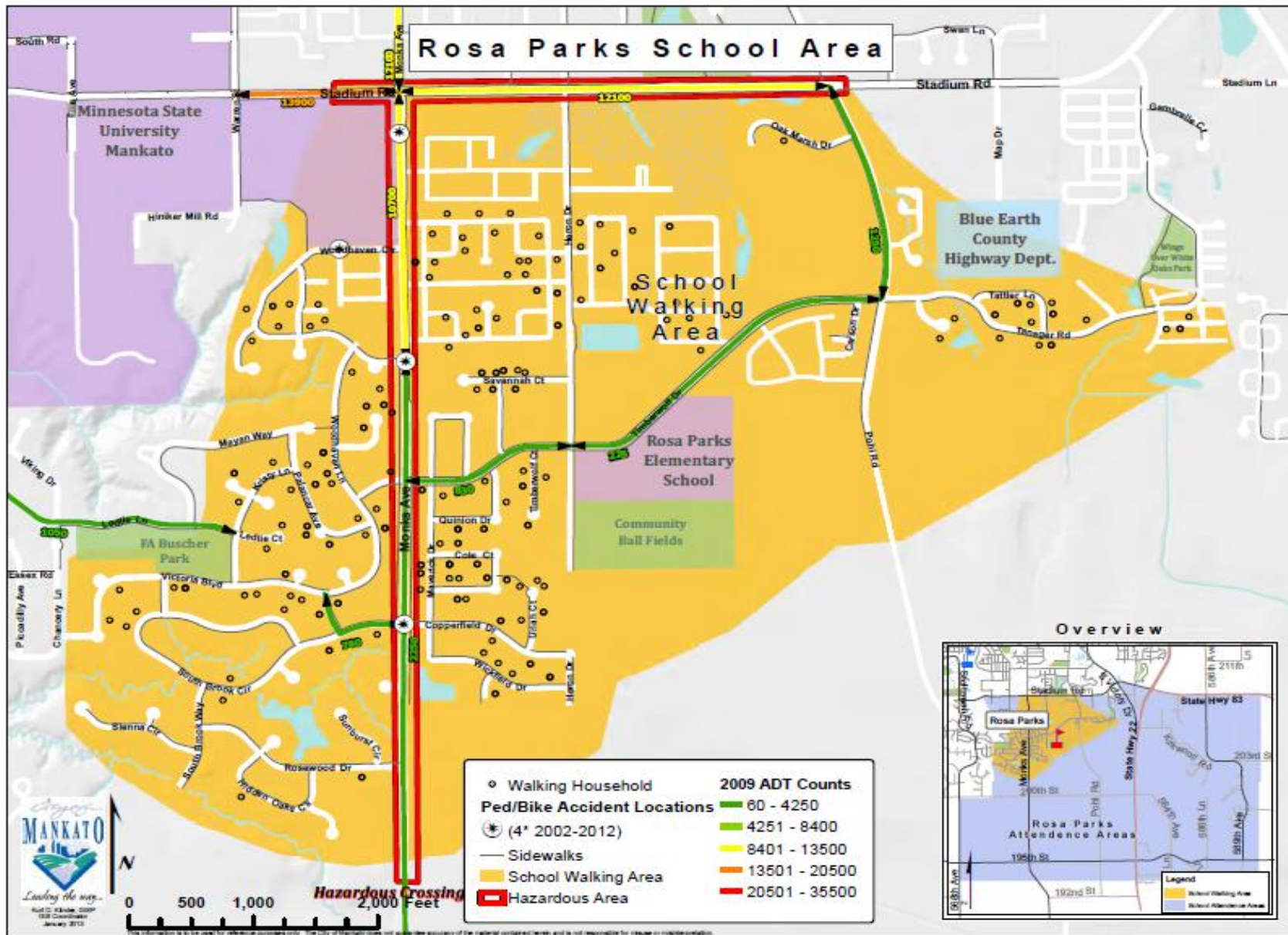
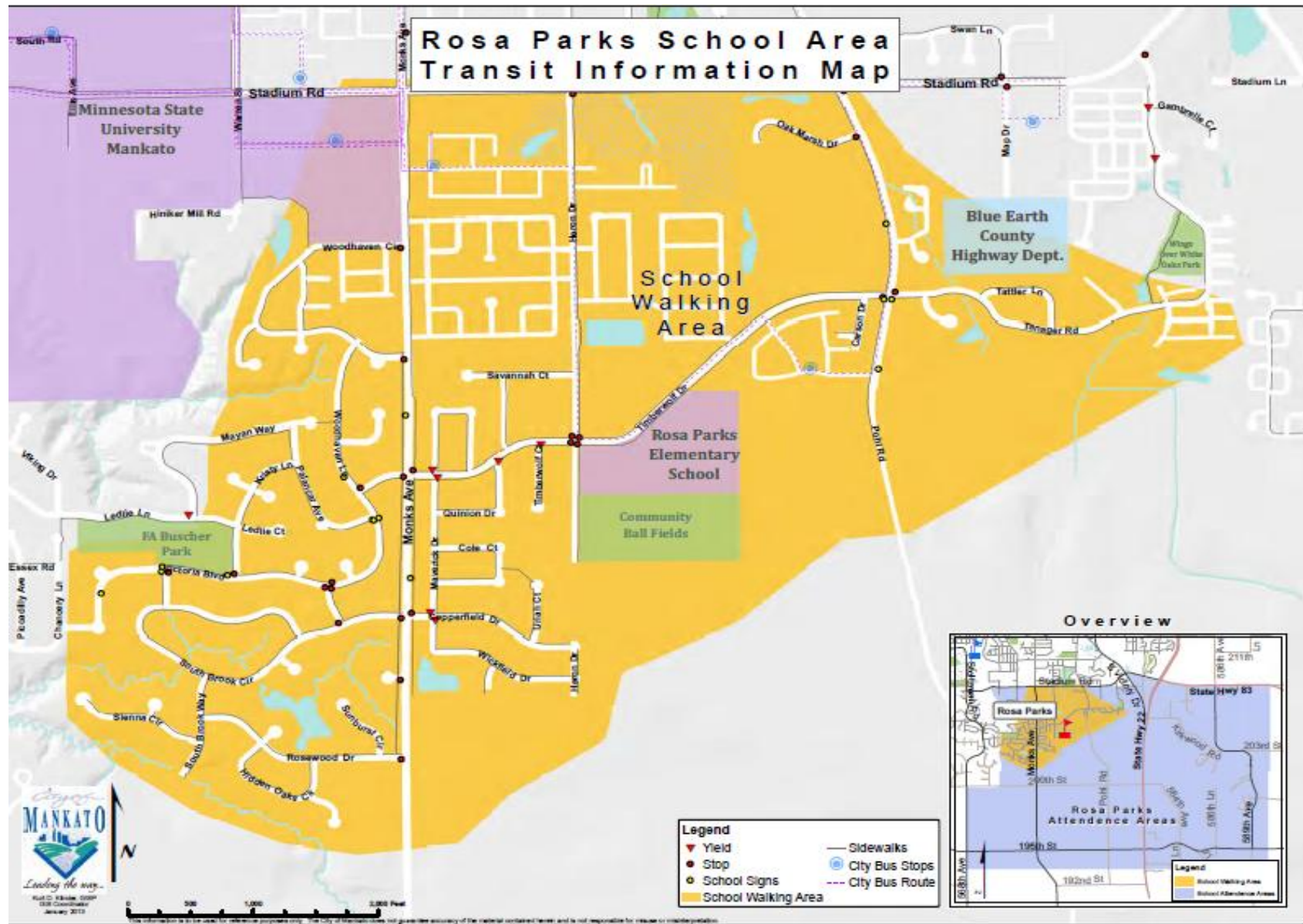


Figure 2.32: Rosa Parks Elementary Transit Information



2.3.6 Washington Elementary School (serves grades K-5)

Washington Elementary is a K-5 school with an enrollment population of 453 students. About 74% of the population is white, about 17% of the population is black, about 4% of the population is Hispanic, 3% of the population is Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.3 % of the population is American Indian/Alaskan Native. Washington has 24 licensed teachers on staff. Approximately 50% of the staff on campus has obtained a master's degree and 49% of the staff on campus has obtained a bachelor's degree and the remaining 1% represents other licensed professionals and support staff. The school day starts at 8:15 a.m. and ends at 2:45 p.m. Students are discouraged to arrive before 8:00 a.m. or remain after 2:50 p.m. Students are escorted to the bus as a group.

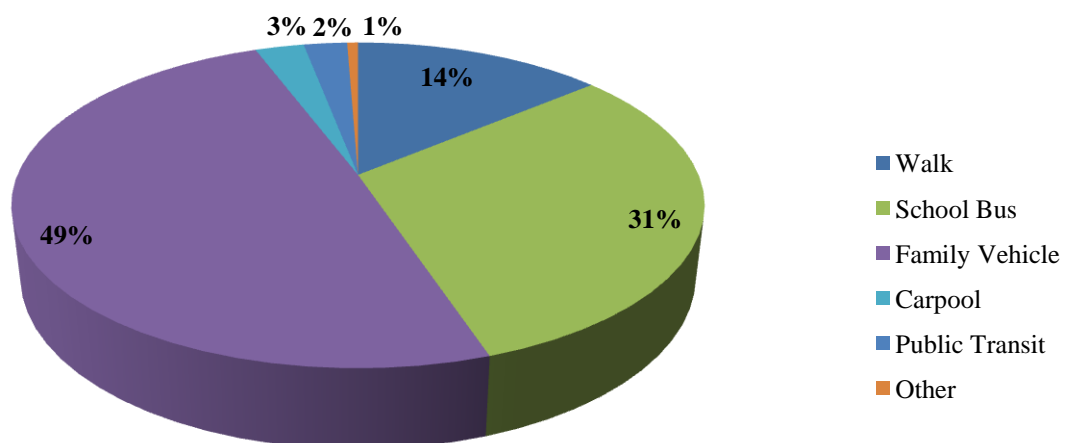
A. Student Survey Results:

Approximately 49% of the Washington students are riding in a family vehicle to school while about 31% are riding the school bus and 14% of the student population is walking (Table 2.7 and Figure 2.24).

Table 2.7: Washington Student Tally Data (Fall, 2012)

Number of Students	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Public Transit	Other
330	46	0	102	163	9	8	2

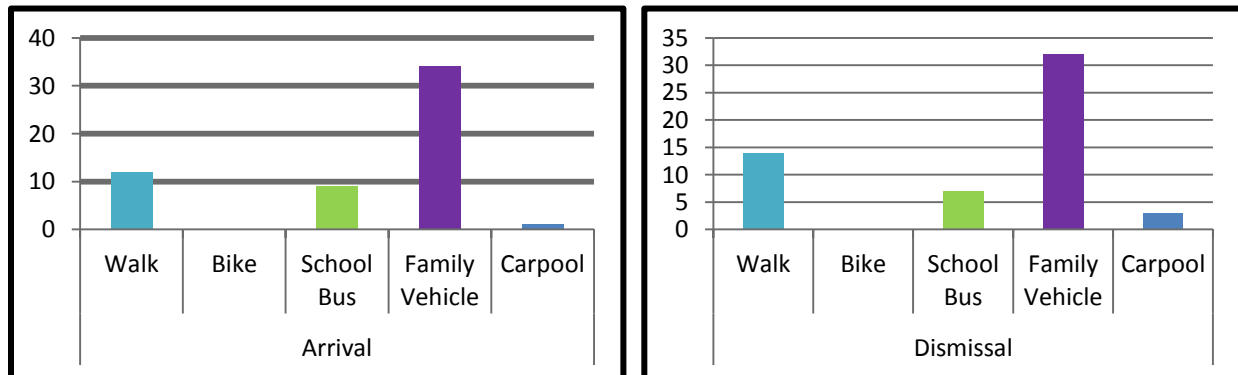
Figure 2.33: Washington Student Tally Data (Fall, 2012)



B. Parent Survey Results:

The primary issue that 76% of Washington parents indicated on the parent survey was the amount of traffic along the pedestrian route. The second issue that 74% of Washington parents indicated was the safety of the street crossings and intersections.

Figure 2.34: Washington Parent Survey Results (Fall, 2012)



C. Existing Conditions:

- i. *Current Infrastructure:* There is a crossing guard at the intersection of Madison Avenue and Dane Street and at the intersection of Main Street and Agency Road. Licensed teachers are on the Washington campus starting at 7:45 a.m. - 3:35 p.m. There is a rotating schedule for morning supervision duty and after school bus duty. While on duty, teachers and staff ensure that the students must walk in an appropriate manner and to remain on paved areas. They also must meet the children at the classroom door when they arrive in the morning. The bike racks are located on the south side of the building.

Figure 2.35: Bike racks located on the south side of Washington Elementary



- ii. *Parent Pick-up and Drop-off Location:* McConnell Street was the main location for parent drop-off and pick-ups. Parents would utilize both sides of McConnell Street to drop-off or pick-up students. Many parents would allow their students to cross McConnell Street by themselves. Several parents were parking in marked ‘no parking’ zones. Other parents would make U-turns on McConnell Street, which congested the street and created a dangerous situation for students who cross McConnell Street. Some parents were noted to park at Christ the Lutheran King Church and encourage their students to cross McConnell Street and meet them in the church parking lot.
- iii. *Bus System:* The buses arrived at staggered times, which established a good flow of traffic on McConnell Street (Figure 2.27). About 100 students use the bus as their primary mode of transportation.

Figure 2.36: Location of bus drop-off/pick-up on McConnell Street



- iv. *Neighborhood Audit:* Throughout the neighborhoods there was at least one sidewalk on almost every street. Capital Drive currently does not have sidewalks on either side of the street and Capital Drive is a location that several students were noted walking on (Figure 2.28). Also a couple of parents were seen dropping their students off and picking them up on Capital Drive. On Pfau Street there are no sidewalks on either side of the road. There is also a missing sidewalk link off of Main Street along Electa Boulevard. If constructed it would improve the overall connectivity in the area. There are no crosswalk markings at the intersection of Main Street and Belmont Avenue or the intersection of Marsh Street and McConnell Street. There is also only one speed limit sign on Main Street, which is a

major collector in the community. There are no school pedestrian signs after the intersection of Main Street and Agency Road.

Figure 2.37: Absence of sidewalk along Capital Drive



Figure 2.38: Washington Elementary School Area

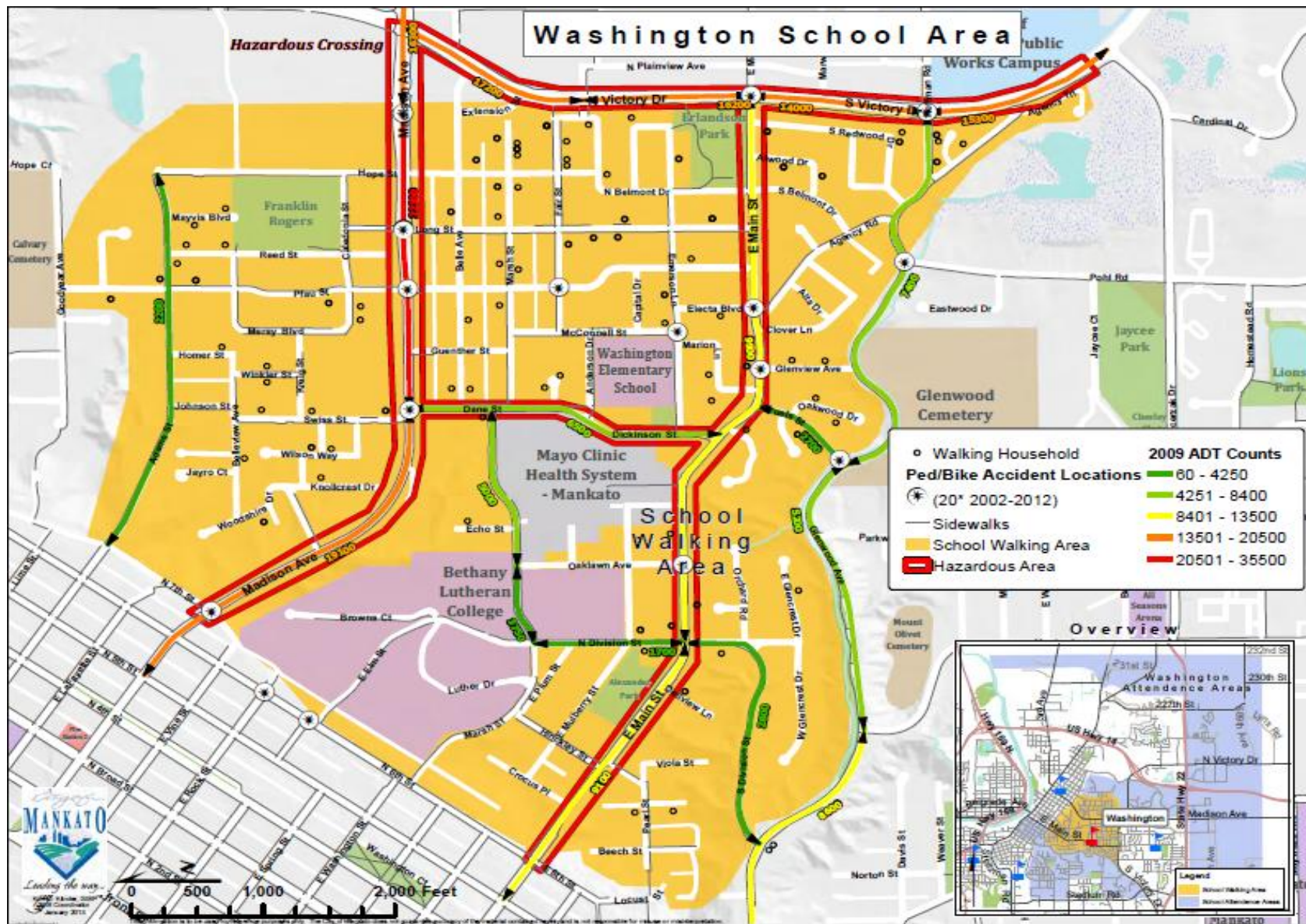
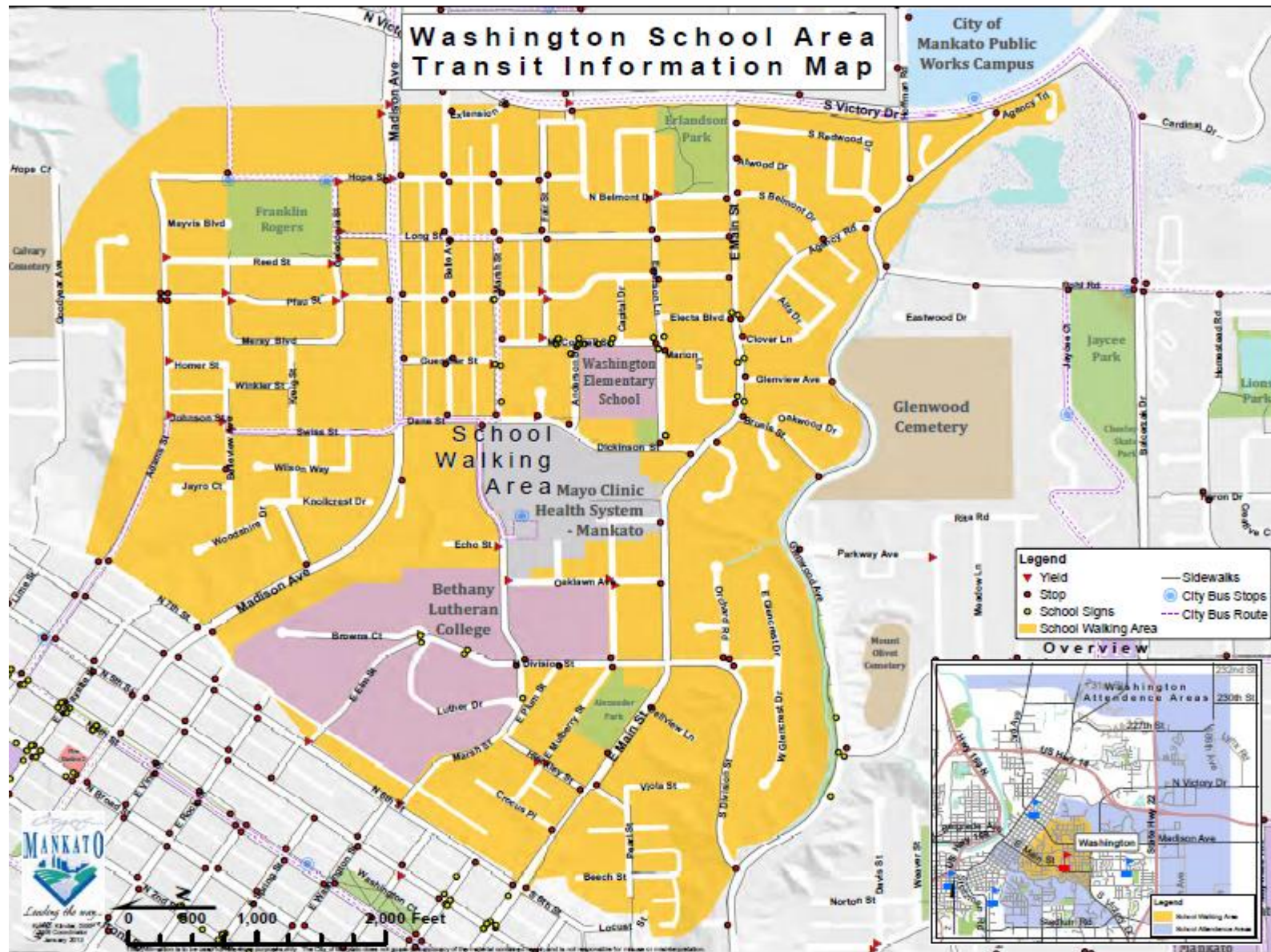


Figure 2.39: Washington Elementary Transit Information



2.4 General Concerns of Neighborhood Walkability

In addition to the walking audit, the following are the top concerns expressed by parents and local stakeholders in terms of the walkability situation in these school areas.

2.4.1 Franklin Neighborhood – Distance

For the school of Franklin Elementary 35% of the student body lives more than 2 miles away from the school's campus. Approximately 50% of these students are willing to walk up to 10 minutes in order to get to and from school.

2.4.2 Jefferson Neighborhood – Safety of Crossings and Intersections

Jefferson Elementary supports a large group of second grade students, 55% of the surveyors who took this survey are parents of second grade children. These debatably safe crossings for children of such a young age appear to be the biggest barrier. 58% of parents said that if the safety of crossings and intersections were to be improved they would probably let their children walk or bike to school.

2.4.3 Kennedy Neighborhood – Insufficient Data

Unfortunately we were only able to receive one full response from the Kennedy Elementary School and their second grade child already walks between ½ a mile and 1 mile to school.

2.4.4 Roosevelt Neighborhood – Safety of Intersections and Crossings

Roosevelt has a relatively high number of nearby students; over 50% live half or less mile from the campus, yet 56% of the students are getting rides to and from school in a family vehicle. Over 55% of parents who took this survey said that if the safety of the crossings and intersections were improved they would probably let their child(ren) walk and bike to school. Over 70% of parents said that they would feel comfortable letting their children walk or bike to school if they were with a responsible adult.

2.4.5 Rosa Parks Neighborhood – Safety of Intersections and Crossings

As seen before, 75% of parents said their biggest deterrent from letting their children walk or bike to and from school is the safety of the intersections and crossings. 71% said that that if the safety of crossings and intersections were to be improved they would probably let their children walk or bike to school. 80% of the parents said that their children are willing to walk up to 20 minutes in order to get to and from school.

2.4.6 Washington Neighborhood – Amount of Traffic Along Route

76% of parents said that their biggest deterrent from letting their children walk or bike to and from school was the amount of traffic along the route and 74% said that they do not feel that the crossings and intersection are safe. These are two very clear and strong problems that can easily be addressed by implementing multiple strategies, such as traffic calming, crossing guards, decreasing the speed limit near a school zone or during school hours. The walking school bus may be a good strategy for Washington Elementary specifically due to the fact that 45% of the student body is second grade or younger.

CHAPTER THREE

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

3.1 Introduction

The following recommendations have been suggested as measures for improvement for the entire school district and the six elementary schools being considered for this SRTS plan. The district-wide improvements are grouped under the “Five E’s” while those for the six elementary schools specifically consider infrastructure/engineering related improvements. Based on these recommended improvements, SRTS vision, goals, strategies and projects were developed and are in the next chapter.

3.2 Potential District-wide Policy Changes

Mankato Area Public School District

Several non-infrastructure district-wide programs have been carefully selected to increase awareness of the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program. In order to implement the SRTS program the district administration could hire a SRTS Coordinator to work with school site principals to develop the SRTS program initiatives. The SRTS program would manage and facilitate the implementation of the ‘5 E’ approach. Various initiatives that were discussed and recommended by the SRTS team include:

i. Evaluation:

- ❖ The site principals would help administer and collect the parent survey and student tally twice a year (fall and spring) to assess change.

ii. Education:

- ❖ It is recommended that the district partner with the City of Mankato to produce school maps that delineates the SRTS recommended routes, which would be passed along to parents and posted on the district’s website.
- ❖ The development and implementation of an annual training program to appropriately use sidewalks and crosswalks.

❖ The development and implementation of bicycle curriculum in the physical education programs. Also accompanying the curriculum with the promotion of bike rodeos and safety courses in partnership with the Greater Mankato Bike/Walk Advocates for students to continue their bicycle education.

❖ The formation of an art and essay contest. The contest would provide students the opportunity to develop safety slogans and art that will promote the SRTS effort. The slogans and art produced can be used as signs or banners as part of a community-wide safety campaign.

❖ The establishment of sustainable walking school buses, bicycle trains or corner captains programs. These programs would use the recommended SRTS routes.

❖ It is recommended that the district host school assemblies where guest speakers would address bicycle and pedestrian safety, health benefits of biking and walking, and other opportunities to join clubs. This activity could happen as a part of a field day, a special assembly or even in lieu of a class trip.

iii. Enforcement:

❖ The district administration would work with local law enforcement to; (1) continue random enforcement efforts, (2) monitor accident data within the walking catchment area of each school, (3) consider installing digital speed signs in the school zones.






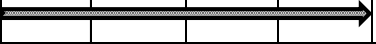























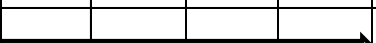

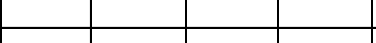

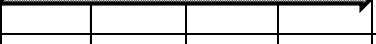

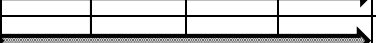


❖ The staggering of the dismissal times. The walkers/bikers would be dismissed first, then the busses, and finally the students who are being picked up in a family vehicle. By adjusting the dismissal time, schools with limited space to separate the modes of transportation can alleviate some of the congestion challenges common around dismissal time.



❖ The implementation of a school patrol/crossing guard program that could be led by staff or possibly fifth grade students. The training of staff and students could be conducted in partnership with the City of Mankato's annual crossing guard training program.

iv. Encouragement:

- ❖ The implementation of a rewards program by creating a punch card system to track and encourage walking and biking to and from school.
- ❖ The encouragement of students to use their acquired knowledge by implementing and promoting ‘Walking and Biking Wednesdays’ where students can use what they learned in class to travel to and from school.
- ❖ The participation in the national ‘Walk to School’ or ‘Bike to School’ days.
- ❖ The development of a before school exercise program. For example, a morning lap program around the playground to score fitness points for a classroom fitness competition.
- ❖ The maintenance and continued inventory of bike racks at each school to ensure there is enough space for everyone to have the opportunity to secure their bikes while at school.
- ❖ The maintenance of the boulevards surrounding the school perimeter’s to ensure increased walkability and safety around the campuses.
- ❖ Collaborate with the City of Mankato to make sure there is consistent pedestrian and school zone signage around all school campuses.

Table 3.1: District-wide Project Planning Matrix

Project	Project Scope	Estimated Project Timeline					Project Responsibility	
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Lead	Collaborator
Hire a 'SRTS Coordinator' to be responsible for the SRTS initiatives	District-wide						MAPSD	MnDOT
Administer and collect annual parent survey (Fall/Spring)	District-wide						MAPSD	-
Administer and collect annual student tally (Fall/Spring)	District-wide						MAPSD	-
Random enforcement checks, monitor accident data within the walking catchment areas and installing digital speed signs in school zones	District-wide						COM	MAPSD
Staggering elementary school dismissal times	District-wide						MAPSD	-
School patrols/crossing guards led by staff or possibly fifth grade students	District-wide						MAPSD	COM
Production of SRTS recommended route maps	District-wide						MAPSD	COM
Implementation and development of an annual pedestrian training program	District-wide						MAPSD	-
Implementation and development of bicycle curriculum in physical education programs	District-wide						MAPSD	MnDOT, GMBWA
Formation of art and/or essay contest	District-wide						MAPSD	-
Establishment of sustainable walking school buses, bicycle trains, or corner captains	District-wide						MAPSD	-
Host educational assemblies with guest speakers on various related SRTS topics	District-wide						MAPSD	MnDOT, COM, GMBWA
Implementation of a punch card system	District-wide						MAPSD	-
Declaring and promoting 'Walking and Biking Wednesdays.'	District-wide						MAPSD	-
Participate and promote the national Walk and Bike to School days	District-wide						MAPSD	-
Develop and implement a before school exercise program	District-wide						MAPSD	-
Maintenance and inventory of school bike racks	District-wide						MAPSD	-
Maintenance of school perimeter boulevards	District-wide						MAPSD	-
Consistent pedestrian and school zone signage at all schools	District-wide						MAPSD	COM

Abbreviation	Organization
MAPSD	Mankato Public School District
MnDOT	Minnesota Department of Transportation
COM	City of Mankato
GMBWA	Greater Mankato Bike/Walk Advocates
Implementation period	
Ongoing initiative	

3.3 Recommended Improvements for Franklin Elementary









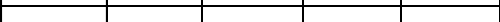

After observing and conducting a site assessment and a neighborhood walking audit the SRTS team noted various infrastructure improvements that, if implemented, can increase the walkability to and from the Franklin Elementary campus.



Engineering (Infrastructure Improvements):

- ❖ The installation of bump outs at the following key intersections near Franklin Elementary as traffic calming measures:
 - a. Intersection of 4th and Lime Street
 - b. Intersection of Lime and Broad Street
 - c. Intersection of Lafayette and N. Broad Street
- ❖ The implementation of reverse angle parking in local area businesses to increase the awareness and the visibility of pedestrians.
- ❖ The conversion of N. Riverfront Drive from a four-lane road to a three-lane road from Madison Avenue to Highway 14. This would be used as a traffic calming initiative and a promotion of multi-modal use on a major collector in the city.
- ❖ The construction of a drop-off lane in the alley off of Adams Street. This would create a more structured pick-up and drop-off environment, which will reduce congestion on N. 2nd Street.
- ❖ The enforcement of a one-way pick-up on N. 2nd Street by using paint, cones, and barriers. This will have a traffic calming effect by narrowing the width of N. 2nd Street.
- ❖ The designation of Lime Street or N. Broad Street as the parent pick-up and drop-off location. This will re-direct traffic away from the other modes of transportation and encourage students to walk across the Franklin campus. This forces students to exercise and exert energy before and after school.
- ❖ The installation of a bus shelter (coordinate with the City of Mankato) on Lime Street. The bus shelter can be used as protection against the elements and encourage safety by reducing congestion. This will help encourage the use of all the streets around the Franklin campus as parent pick-up and drop off locations.

- ❖ The designation of N. 2nd Street for only the younger students' pick-up and drop-off location. This will allow for a less congested and safer environment for the more vulnerable students.
- ❖ The barricading of N. 2nd Street during dismissal to hold cars until all pedestrians and buses have cleared the immediate area. This gives priority to bussers and pedestrians to exit the campus first and discourages family vehicles by making the process inconvenient to drivers.
- ❖ The conversion of 4th Street and Broad Street from one-ways to two-way streets. This will be a traffic calming measure that will slow cars down, which will create a safer neighborhood for pedestrians.

Table 3.2: Franklin Elementary Project Planning Matrix

Project	Project Scope	Estimated Project Timeline					Project Responsibility	
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Lead	Collaborator
Installation of bump outs at key intersections	Franklin Elementary						COM	-
Implementing reverse angle parking in local area business	Franklin Elementary						COM	-
Study the conversion of N. Riverfront Drive from a four-lane road to a three lane road from Madison Avenue to Highway 14	Franklin Elementary						COM	-
Construction of a drop-off lane in the alley off of Adams Street	Franklin Elementary						MAPSD	COM
Enforcement of a one-way pick-up on N. 2nd Street	Franklin Elementary						MAPSD	COM
Designation of Lime Street or N. Broad Street as the parent pick-up and drop-off location	Franklin Elementary						MAPSD	COM
Installation of a bus shelter on Lime Street	Franklin Elementary						COM	MAPSD
Designation of N. 2nd Street for younger students pick-up and drop-off location only	Franklin Elementary						MAPSD	COM
Barricading of N. 2nd Street during dismissal to hold cars until pedestrians and buses have cleared the campus	Franklin Elementary						MAPSD	COM
Conversion of 4th Street and Broad Street from a one-way to a two-way street.	Franklin Elementary						COM	MAPSD

Abbreviation	Organization
MAPSD	Mankato Public School District
MnDOT	Minnesota Department of Transportation
COM	City of Mankato
GMBWA	Greater Mankato Bike/Walk Advocates
Implementation period	
Ongoing initiative	

3.4 Recommended Improvements for Jefferson Elementary

After observing and conducting a site assessment and a neighborhood walking audit the SRTS team noted various infrastructure improvements that, if implemented, can increase the walkability to and from the Jefferson Elementary campus.

Engineering (Infrastructure Improvements):

- ❖ The installation of curb cuts and pedestrian ramps at the following key intersections near Jefferson Elementary.

- a. Intersection of Byron Street and E. Lewis Street

- b. Intersection of Center Street and Pleasant Street

- ❖ The repair of sidewalks in the surrounding Jefferson neighborhoods. The neighborhoods are older, so various sidewalks are uneven and have large cracks in them. In particular, Lincoln Street, Center Street, and Shabut Street were noted in the neighborhood assessment as needing various improvements.

- ❖ The coordination with the City of Mankato to install school zone signs in the proper locations around the school.





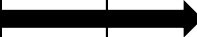



- ❖ The conversion of the James Avenue and Fairfield Street intersection from a two-way stop to a four-way stop. This will force traffic on James Avenue to have a greater awareness of the pedestrians walking off of the Jefferson campus into the surrounding neighborhood.



- ❖ The adaption of the lower lot off of Fairfield Street as the bus pick-up and drop-off area. All other traffic should be redirected to the upper lot. This will greatly reduce congestion in the already small upper parking lot.

- ❖ The new placement of bike racks to increase ease of access for the rider.

- ❖ The coordination with Mankato West High School to provide high school students as walking school bus drivers for the Jefferson Elementary students.

Table 3.3: Jefferson Elementary Project Planning Matrix

Project	Project Scope	Estimated Project Timeline					Project Responsibility	
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Lead	Collaborator
Installation curb cuts and pedestrian ramps at key intersections	Jefferson Elementary						COM	-
Repair of sidewalks in surrounding Jefferson neighborhoods	Jefferson Elementary						COM	-
Conversion of James Avenue and Fairfield Street intersection from a two-way to a four-way stop	Jefferson Elementary						COM	-
Adaption of lower lot as bus pick-up and drop-off location	Jefferson Elementary						MAPSD	-
New placement of bike racks on campus	Jefferson Elementary						MAPSD	-
Coordination with Mankato West High School to provide older students as walking school bus drivers	Jefferson Elementary						MAPSD	-

Abbreviation	Organization
MAPSD	Mankato Public School District
MnDOT	Minnesota Department of Transportation
COM	City of Mankato
GMBWA	Greater Mankato Bike/Walk Advocates
Implementation period	
Ongoing initiative	

3.5 Recommended Improvements for Kennedy Elementary

After observing and conducting a site assessment and a neighborhood walking audit the SRTS team noted various infrastructure improvements that, if implemented, can increase the walkability to and from the Kennedy Elementary campus.

Engineering (Infrastructure Improvements):

❖ Missing sidewalk links:

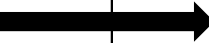







- a. There is no sidewalk on the south side of Hoffman Road (a four lane road) from Victory Drive to Jaybee Lane and from Diamond Creek to Hosanna Drive. Sidewalks need to be installed on the south side to fully utilize the mid-block pedestrian crossing signal.
- b. There is no sidewalk on the west side of Kennedy Street.
- c. There is no sidewalk on Manitou Drive. Also by adding a sidewalk on the north side of Main Street from Manitou Drive to the school campus area, would allow students another safe crossing point on Main Street.
- d. There is no sidewalk on Thro Avenue. The street does have a trail that crosses E. Main Street which leads to Mankato East High School. The pedestrians could benefit from a paved sidewalk system on Thro Avenue because the trail was highly used during the SRTS team observations.



❖ The coordination with Mankato East High School to provide high school students as walking school bus drivers for the Kennedy Elementary students.

❖ The elimination of staff parking in the small parking lot by the front bus loop. Move staff parking across Kennedy Street, allowing parents to drop off in the small lot by bus loop. This will reduce the number of students having to cross Kennedy Street to get to school or to their family vehicle.

❖ The further evaluation of extending the Kennedy school zone speed limit signs (20 mph) to the intersection of E. Main Street and Manitou Drive to ensure safe crossings for students that must cross E. Main Street to get to school.

Table 3.4: Kennedy Elementary Project Planning Matrix

Project	Project Scope	Estimated Project Timeline					Project Responsibility	
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Lead	Collaborator
Missing sidewalk link along the south side of Hoffman Road	Kennedy Elementary						COM	-
Missing sidewalk links in Kennedy neighborhoods	Kennedy Elementary						COM	-
Coordination with Mankato East High School to provide older students as walking school bus drivers	Kennedy Elementary						MAPSD	-
Elimination of staff parking in the small parking lot by the front bus loop	Kennedy Elementary						MAPSD	-
Evaluate the extension of Kennedy school zone and ensure safe crossings for students at the intersection of E. Main Street and Manitou Drive	Kennedy Elementary						COM	-

Abbreviation	Organization
MAPSD	Mankato Public School District
MnDOT	Minnesota Department of Transportation
COM	City of Mankato
GMBWA	Greater Mankato Bike/Walk Advocates
Implementation period	
Ongoing initiative	

3.6 Recommended Improvements for Roosevelt Elementary

After observing and conducting a site assessment and a neighborhood walking audit the SRTS team noted various infrastructure improvements that, if implemented, can increase the walkability to and from the Roosevelt Elementary campus.

Engineering (Infrastructure Improvements):

❖ Missing sidewalk links:

- a. Sidewalk completion on Winona Street from West Pleasant Street/Blue Earth Street to W. 6th Street. Bike routes along Winona Street are not well connected.
- b. Sidewalk completion on Blue Earth Street.

❖ The installation of pedestrian crossing signs at the intersection of Sibley Street and S. Riverfront Drive and at the crosswalk of the Minneopa Bike Trail and S. Riverfront Drive. The signs would encourage pedestrian awareness on the busy roads.

❖ In coordination with MnDOT, review and determine possible pedestrian crossing improvement at the intersection of Sibley Street (CSAH 8) and S. Riverfront Drive to provide 24/7 pedestrian protection. Some ideas to calm the traffic and improve pedestrian safety include installing a round-a-bout, pedestrian bump-outs, pedestrian refuge medians and Riverfront Drive lane configuration changes such as a four-lane to three-lane section.


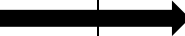






❖ The realignment of the crosswalk at the intersection of Fifth Street and Sibley Street to encourage walkability and safety in the Roosevelt neighborhood.

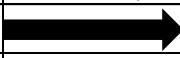

❖ The coordination with the City of Mankato to install consistent signage around the Roosevelt campus. Designate certain areas as bus parking only, no vehicle parking, and parent pick-up and drop-off zones. Possibly refer to Kennedy Elementary campus as a model.

❖ The shifting of the “backpack” drop-off location from Hubbell Avenue to Owatonna Street will redirect the traffic around the school so congestion will not be concentrated on any one particular side of the school.

- ❖ The implementation of reverse angle parking on Owatonna Street for staff parking. This would create more vehicle parking and provide a safer environment because the overall visibility would increase.
- ❖ The conversion of the two-way stop on Owatonna Street and 6th Street to a four-way stop. This will force traffic to have a greater awareness of the pedestrians walking in the surrounding neighborhood.
- ❖ The partnership with the Minnesota Department of Transportation to utilize the current green space between W. 5th Street and Highway 169 along with the coordination with the City of Mankato to explore options for green space expansion and vehicular access on W. 5th Street.

Table 3.5: Roosevelt Elementary Project Planning Matrix

Project	Project Scope	Estimated Project Timeline					Project Responsibility	
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Lead	Collaborator
Installation of key sidewalk links in Roosevelt neighborhoods	Roosevelt Elementary						COM	-
Installation of pedestrian crossing signs at Sibley and S. Riverfront Drive and the crosswalk of Minneopa Trail and S. Riverfront Drive	Roosevelt Elementary						MnDOT	COM
Further study possible pedestrian improvement projects at the intersection of Sibley Street (CSAH 8) and S. Riverfront Drive	Roosevelt Elementary						MnDOT/County	COM
Realignment of crosswalk at the intersection of Fifth Street and Sibley Street	Roosevelt Elementary						COM	-
Shifting "backpack" drop-off location from Hubbell Avenue to Owatonna Street	Roosevelt Elementary						MAPSD	-
Implementation of reverse angle parking on Owatonna Street	Roosevelt Elementary						MAPSD	COM
Conversion of the two-way stop on Owatonna Street and 6th Street to a four-way stop	Roosevelt Elementary						COM	-
Utilize the current green space between 5th Street and Highway 169	Roosevelt Elementary						MAPSD	MnDOT and COM

Abbreviation	Organization
MAPSD	Mankato Public School District
MnDOT	Minnesota Department of Transportation
COM	City of Mankato
GMBWA	Greater Mankato Bike/Walk Advocates
County	Blue Earth County
Implementation period	
Ongoing initiative	







3.7 Recommended Improvements for Rosa Parks Elementary



After observing and conducting a site assessment and a neighborhood walking audit the SRTS team noted various infrastructure improvements that, if implemented, can increase the walkability to and from the Rosa Parks Elementary campus.

Engineering (Infrastructure Improvements):

- ❖ The installation of bike racks that would accommodate larger bicycles for older students and teachers.
- ❖ The coordination with the City of Mankato to install signage along Timberwolf Drive to discourage parents from dropping their students off on the main road.
- ❖ The installation of a pedestrian crossing sign at the intersection of Timberwolf Drive and Heron Drive is needed to remind drivers to be aware and to allow the right of way to the walking pedestrians.
- ❖ The alignment of crosswalks and pedestrian ramps to ensure walkability of intersections.

Table 3.6: Rosa Parks Elementary Project Planning Matrix

Project	Project Scope	Estimated Project Timeline					Project Responsibility	
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Lead	Collaborator
Installation of bike racks that would accommodate larger bicycles	Rosa Parks Elementary						MAPSD	-
Installation of signage along Timberwolf Drive and Heron Drive	Rosa Parks Elementary						COM	MAPSD
Ensure alignment of crosswalk and pedestrian ramps	Rosa Parks Elementary						COM	-

Abbreviation	Organization
MAPSD	Mankato Public School District
MnDOT	Minnesota Department of Transportation
COM	City of Mankato
GMBWA	Greater Mankato Bike/Walk Advocates
Implementation period	
Ongoing initiative	

3.8 Recommended Improvements for Washington Elementary

After observing and conducting a site assessment and a neighborhood walking audit the SRTS team noted various infrastructure improvements that, if implemented, can increase the walkability to and from the Washington Elementary campus.

Engineering (Infrastructure Improvements):

❖ Missing sidewalk links:

- a. Sidewalk completion along Main Street, which is in-line with the city's Complete Streets initiative. Bump-outs, signage, crosswalks and medians could also be used to calm traffic along Main Street.
- b. Sidewalk completion along E. Main Street from Agency Road to Victory Drive.
- c. Sidewalk completion on east side of S. Division Street from E. Main Street to Glencrest Road.
- d. Sidewalk installation along Electa Boulevard from E. Main Street, north to Emerson Lane, and west to McConnell Street.
- e. Sidewalk installation on the east side of Dane Street from Madison Avenue to Anderson Drive.
- f. Sidewalk installation on the east side of McConnell Street from Fair Street to Capital Drive.
- g. Sidewalk installation on Pfau Street from Madison Avenue to E. Main Street.
- h. Complete sidewalk network on Capital Drive from McConnell Street to Pfau Street.






❖ Crosswalks were not visible at the following intersections:



- a. Ensure crosswalk visibilities along Dane Street and Dickinson Street from Madison Avenue to E. Main Street.
- b. Intersection of Marsh Street and McConnell Street

c. Intersection of Main Street and Belmont Drive

- ❖ In coordination with the City of Mankato, review and determine a pedestrian crossing safety enhancement at the intersection of Main Street and Electa Boulevard to improve greater pedestrian awareness and safety. Improvements could result in pedestrian signal, bump-outs, refuge median, etc.
- ❖ The designation of Emerson Lane as the parent pick-up and drop-off location to reduce congestion on McConnell Street.
- ❖ The designation of no parking on Anderson Drive from the school parking lot entrance to the Dane Street and Dickinson Street intersection. This would greatly reduce traffic congestion.

Table 3.7: Washington Elementary Project Planning Matrix

Project	Project Scope	Estimated Project Timeline					Project Responsibility	
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Lead	Collaborator
Installation of key sidewalk links throughout the Washington neighborhoods	Washington Elementary						COM	-
Ensure crosswalk visibility in Washington neighborhoods	Washington Elementary						COM	-
Installation of a pedestrian improvement project at the intersection of Main Street and Electa Boulevard.	Washington Elementary						COM	-
Designation of Emerson Lane as the parent pick-up and drop-off location	Washington Elementary						MAPSD	-
Designation of no parking on Anderson Drive from the school parking lot entrance to the Dane and Dickinson intersection	Washington Elementary						COM	MAPSD

Abbreviation	Organization
MAPSD	Mankato Public School District
MnDOT	Minnesota Department of Transportation
COM	City of Mankato
GMBWA	Greater Mankato Bike/Walk Advocates
Implementation period	
Ongoing initiative	

3.9 Walking Audits and Observation Conclusions

After all of the six schools were audited and the recommendations compiled, the SRTS team scheduled a community meeting to gather further information and ideas from parents and citizens. The community meeting was held on February, 26th 2013. The meeting focused on garnering additional information from parents and citizens about their experiences and neighborhoods. To collect this information, six different small groups were formed that focused on one of the elementary schools. Each small group had a facilitator, a note taker and several visual aids that helped guide the discussion. About 15 parents, neighborhood citizens, and principals were in attendance. Many of the recommendations that were brought up by parents' and citizens' coincided with what the SRTS team noticed during their audits. The next chapter discusses the vision, goals, strategies and projects based upon these recommendations.

CHAPTER FOUR

VISION, GOALS, STRATEGIES AND ISSUES TO CONSIDER AS POTENTIAL SRTS PROJECTS

4.1 Introduction

Having identified the barriers for safe routes at these schools, this chapter is focused on addressing these hurdles. Hence, the chapter presents a vision statement, which expresses a long-term objective for SRTS planning in these school areas. This vision statement also encapsulates the issues that address the problems identified in these school areas. Five goals -based on this vision statement- are also presented in this chapter. Strategies to achieve these goals and projects to achieve the strategies are also discussed here.

4.2 Vision Statement and Goals

4.2.1 Vision Statement

Safe Routes to School will result in increasing opportunities for school children to safely walk and bike to and from school, thereby resulting in healthier school-age population, an improved environment, and an enhanced quality of life in our communities.

4.2.2 Goals

This SRTS plan will seek to accomplish the above stated vision by considering five main goals. These goals have been formulated based on ideas gathered from meetings with SRTS stakeholders in view of the vision statement. These goals include:

1. Provide safe walking and bicycling accommodations along primary student travel routes;
2. Promote safe walking and bicycling among students;
3. Work with schools, parents and the local police department to improve on road security along the designated safe routes;
4. Increase awareness of the health and environmental benefits of the SRTS program in schools and within the SRTS communities; and
5. Monitor and evaluate the performance of the SRTS program annually through stakeholders' consultative meetings.

4.3 Strategies

Strategies have been developed to achieve the SRTS goals specified in 4.2.2 above. These strategies have been presented in two main formats. The first format groups these strategies according to the SRTS “Five E’s” (see Table 4.1). The second format also groups the strategies based on the SRTS goals (see Table 4.2). Each strategy has some details, and these have been presented in Appendix 5.

4.3.1 Strategy Grouping based on the SRTS “Five E’s”

While it is true that each of the SRTS’ “Five E’s” are linked to one another, the strategies –as presented in Table 4.1- are often woven together and qualify as both “encouragement” and “education” activities in many cases. Education initiatives usually involve teaching pedestrian, bicyclist, and traffic safety and creating awareness of the benefits and goals of SRTS. Encouragement initiatives compliment education well, because they involve the SRTS Task Force as well as school and community leaders’ coordination, conducting, and spreading the word about SRTS activities and benefits.

4.3.2 Strategy Grouping based on the SRTS Goals

The SRTS strategies have been grouped under the various goals formulated to show how specific strategies aid achieving specific STRTS goals (see Table 4.2).

4.4 Conclusion

This plan will be a guide the Mankato Area Public Schools efforts in a SRTS program. Improving on the walkability/bikability situation in school neighborhoods requires conscious efforts from stakeholders in identifying existing barriers and opportunities. This SRTS plan is the evidence of such conscious efforts geared towards making walking and biking safe for school children in these six elementary schools.

The success of this SRTS program depends on how well the proposed initiatives incorporates all the Five E’s as well as partnerships arrangements among stakeholders for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of initiatives. The SRTS coordinator will be crucial in aligning all of the elements as well as maintaining, updating and evaluating the plan and any SRTS initiatives that are implemented.

All Five E's strategies (as proposed in this plan) have close ties that promote and result in a safer and healthier environment for students. Existing and future partnership arrangements throughout the community is also necessary because all Five E's require cooperation among the school district, the city, the county, MnDOT, and the other community stakeholders to make this plan serve its purpose.

Table 4.1: Grouping of the SRTS Strategies Based on “Five E’s”

“Five E’s” Area	Strategy
Education Strategies	Maps delineating SRTS recommended routes should be produced and sent to parents by the School District (in collaboration with the City of Mankato).
	Develop and implement an annual training program on the appropriate use of sidewalks and crosswalks.
	Develop and implement a bicycle curriculum in the physical education programs. This should be accompanied with the promotion of bike rodeos and safety courses in partnership.
	Implement art and essay contests for children to develop safety slogans and art while learning about better safety practices.
	Establish sustainable walking buses, bicycle trains or corner captains programs for the recommended SRTS routes.
	District should host school assemblies where guest speakers can address students on bicycle and pedestrian safety issues.
Encouragement Strategies	Implement a rewards program by creating a punch card system to track and encourage walking and biking to and from school.
	Implement 'Walking and Biking' Wednesdays for students to use what they learned in class to travel to and from school.
	Participate in the national 'Walk to School' or 'Bike to School' days.
	Develop a before school exercise program - for instance, a morning lap program around the playground to score fitness points for a classroom fitness competition.
Enforcement Strategies	School District should work with local law enforcement to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue enforcement efforts; 2. Monitor accident data within the walking catchment area of each school; and 3. Consider Installing digital speed signs in the school zones.
	School dismissal times should be staggered to alleviate congestion challenges around dismissal time -first dismiss walkers/bikers, followed by bussers, then

“Five E’s” Area	Strategy
	students being picked up in family vehicles.
	Implement a school patrol/crossing guard program that could be led by staff or fifth grade students. Training of the guards could be done in partnership with the City of Mankato.
Engineering Strategies	<p>The engineering strategies are focused on the following central themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Complete/Connect Sidewalk Network in Critical Student Travel Areas; ❖ Install Bike Lanes Along Primary Student Travel Routes; ❖ Restrict Turning Movements to alleviate congestion and queuing (traffic stacking) in school areas; and ❖ Install Traffic Calming Measures (curb extensions, speed tables, traffic circles, raised crosswalks, narrow lanes, etc.) in school areas.
Evaluation Strategies	<p>Establish a Standing Safe Routes to School Task Force in each community to review and refine the SRTS program in the community’s school area(s).</p> <p>Site principals should help administer and collect parent survey and student tally twice a year (fall and spring) to assess change.</p> <p>Complete Walking and Biking Audits at least once a year to evaluate the effectiveness of safety initiatives.</p> <p>Review and Revise SRTS Plan by Safe Routes to School Task Force to restate priorities and actions at least every 5 years.</p>

Table 4.2: Grouping of the SRTS Strategies Based on the SRTS Goals

Goal	Strategy
<i>Provide safe walking and bicycling accommodations along primary student travel routes;</i>	Complete/Connect Sidewalk Network in Critical Student Travel Areas.
	Install Bike Lanes Along Primary Student Travel Routes.
	Restrict Turning Movements to alleviate congestion and queuing (traffic stacking) in school areas.
	Install Traffic Calming Measures (curb extensions, speed tables, traffic circles, raised crosswalks, narrow lanes, etc.) in school areas.
	Establish sustainable walking buses, bicycle trains or corner captains programs for the recommended SRTS routes.
	School dismissal times should be staggered to alleviate congestion challenges around dismissal time -first dismiss walkers/bikers, followed by bussers, then students being picked up in family vehicles.
<i>Promote safe walking and bicycling among students;</i>	Develop and implement an annual training program on the appropriate use of sidewalks and crosswalks.
	Maps delineating SRTS recommended routes should be produced and sent to parents by the School District (in collaboration with the City of Mankato).
	Implement art and essay contests for children to develop safety slogans and art while learning about better safety practices.
	District should host school assemblies where guest speakers can address students on bicycle and pedestrian safety issues.
<i>Work with schools and the local police department to improve on road security along the designated safe routes;</i>	School District should work with local law enforcement to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue enforcement efforts; 2. Monitor accident data within the walking catchment area of each school; and 3. Consider installing digital speed signs in the school zones.
	Implement a school patrol/crossing guard program that could be led by staff or fifth grade students. Training of the guards could be done in partnership with the City of Mankato.

<i>Increase awareness of the health and environmental benefits of the SRTS program in schools and within the SRTS communities; and</i>	Develop and implement a bicycle curriculum in the physical education programs. This should be accompanied with the promotion of bike rodeos and safety courses in partnership.
	Implement a rewards program by creating a punch card system to track and encourage walking and biking to and from school.
	Implement 'Walking and Biking' Wednesdays for students to use what they learned in class to travel to and from school.
	Participate in the national 'Walk to School' or 'Bike to School' days.
	Develop a before school exercise program - for instance, a morning lap program around the playground to score fitness points for a classroom fitness competition.
<i>Monitor and evaluate the performance of the SRTS program annually through stakeholders' consultative meetings.</i>	Establish a Standing Safe Routes to School Task Force in each community to review and refine the SRTS program in the community's school area (s).
	Site principals should help administer and collect parent survey and student tally twice a year (fall and spring) to assess change.
	Complete Walking and Biking Audits at least once a year to evaluate the effectiveness of safety initiatives.
	Review and Revise SRTS Plan by Safe Routes to School Task Force to restate priorities and actions at least every 5 years.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Kick-Off Meeting

Attendance Sheet

Name	Representing
Sheri L. Allen	Mankato Area Public School District
Mark Anderson	City of Mankato
Lisa Bender	MnDOT SRTS Coordinator
Landon Bode	City of Mankato
Joshua Burman	Franklin Elementary
John Considine	Tourtellotte Park Neighborhood Association
Linda Engstrom	Greater Mankato Bike/Walk Advocates
Ann Haggerty	Roosevelt Elementary
Scott Johnson	Jefferson Elementary
John Kind	YMCA
Kurt Klinder	City of Mankato
Mike Laven	City of Mankato
Rick Lund	Rosa Parks Elementary
Joe Meixl	Mankato Area Public School District
Will Remmert	Washington Elementary
Mark Scheidel	MnDOT – Mankato
Paul Voegl	City of Mankato
Linda Wensel	Mankato Area Public School District
Matt Westermayer	City of Mankato

Brief Overview and Agenda of Meeting

This meeting was the initial stage in developing a comprehensive “Safe Routes to School” Plan for six elementary schools in the Mankato School District. The meeting, led by Ronda Allis (Director of Community and Economic Development, Region Nine Development Commission), focused on the following:

- ❖ Introduce the local SRTS team;
- ❖ Provide a brief overview of the



project;

- ❖ Discuss local issues and concerns;
- ❖ Develop a vision statement; and
- ❖ Set future meeting dates.

Meeting Proceedings

The meeting was called to order around 9:35am. After a brief statement of the meeting's purpose by Miss Allis, participants present were kindly asked to introduce themselves. This being the first meeting for the group, the presentation by Miss Allis captured how the project idea was conceived, those involved, and the initial processes followed –from consultations with various stakeholders to the grant application. She also made mention of the role played by each SRTS team member. The projects expected benefits, potential timeline and goals were also touched on. Participants were also given some key points to note in selecting their preferred SRTS “Vision Statement”.

Key Points from Meeting

- ❖ The purpose of the project is simply to encourage children to walk and bike to school based on the physiological and health benefits of walking and biking.
- ❖ The choice of six elementary schools in Mankato school district out of the 17 schools was based on the rationale of making the project small enough for the SRTS team to manage. However, the plan output will serve as a model in developing similar plans for the remaining schools.
- ❖ In terms of the project's surveys to be conducted, 90% of parents could be reached through online surveys. Surveys will then be sent to parents to identify their concerns with respect to allowing their children to walk and/or bike to school, and their suggestions of how the project can meet their concerns. Teachers in some selected classes within the six elementary schools will also have surveys in their classrooms to help provide statistics of children who walk and bike to school.
- ❖ There will also be a “walking audit” at the elementary schools. Since MN/DOT's expert on SRTS needs to be present for at least one of the audits, there is no fixed time yet. However, based on initial information provided during the meeting by Lisa (the

representative of MN/DOT's SRTS), the tentative dates of November 8th and 9th were noted for the audit.

- ❖ In the meantime, the SRST committee members are having an analysis of traffic data and a review of available literature on the project. Road safety designs for biking and walking are also being looked into by the team in consultation with the city of Mankato's Engineering and GIS Department.

Meeting Conclusion

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:20am. Participants submitted their responses for:

- ❖ the survey on their top 3 concerns regarding the project; and
- ❖ their preferred "vision statement" for the project

Miss Allis also informed the group that the results for the "concerns survey" and the final "vision statement" will be sent to participants via e-mail. The walking/biking audit will be the group's next meeting and the date for this will be communicated to members.

APPENDIX 2: Steering Committee Meeting

Attendance Sheet

Name	Representing
Ronda Allis	Region Nine Development Commission
Mark Anderson	City of Mankato
Joshua Burman	Franklin Elementary
John Considine	Tourtellotte Park Neighborhood Association
Linda Engstrom	Greater Mankato Bike/Walk Advocate
John Kind	YMCA
Kurt Klinder	City of Mankato
Joe Meixl	Mankato Area Public School District
Mark Scheidel	MnDOT – Mankato
Paul Voegl	City of Mankato
Matt Westermayer	City of Mankato

TO: Ronda Allis (Director, Community and Economic Development, Region Nine Development Commission)

Date: 11/19/2012

Subject: Minutes of the Steering Committee Meeting – SRTS, Mankato Area Public Schools

Meeting Date: November 19th, 2012

Time: 2:00pm – 3:30pm

Venue: Intergovernmental Center - Mankato, MN

Roll Call of Participants:

Brief Overview and Agenda of Meeting

This meeting was a smaller gathering intended to catch up the group members and to set the future events and keep everything on track. Throughout the meeting the following items were discussed:

- ❖ Update on SRTS Workshop – December 17th – 18th
- ❖ Discuss successes from Kick-off Meeting
 - Vision Statement Decision

- Summary of data collections (Parent & Student Surveys)
- ❖ Schedule walking audits at all schools
 - Preview walking audit
- ❖ Discuss data collection – existing conditions
 - Sub committees
- ❖ Review DRAFT Scope of Work and Deliverables
 - Review upcoming and future deadlines
- ❖ Next steps
- ❖ Other business

Meeting Proceedings

The meeting began at approximately 2:00 p.m. and was led by Ronda Allis as before in previous meetings. Shortly after introductions the group discussed when exactly it is that the local elementary schools begin and end classes. This information will aid the group in the observation and study of the students' arrival and dismissal during the school assessments. Dates



for the first two assessments were decided to be on the 29th (from approximately 7:45 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.) and the afternoon from roughly 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. At that time the committee will meet with Mr. Andrew Harrison, MN/DOT SRTS to do a few of the assessments before we have Mr. Mark Fenton who performs nationwide assessments on schools throughout the county.

During the meeting data from the kick-off meeting the committee and the ongoing surveys were revealed and discussed leading to a decision on the final vision statement for the program itself. The decision of the vision statement itself helps to differentiate between SRTS ultimate goal and the separate outcomes we hope to provide to all in the community. These two distinct topics will be better explained in the official SRTS plan.

APPENDIX 3: Safe Routes to School Team Meeting 3

Attendance Sheet

Name	Representing
Ronda Allis	Region Nine Development Commission
Mark Anderson	City of Mankato
Landon Bode	City of Mankato
Linda Engstrom	Greater Mankato Bike/Walk Advocate
Rick Lund	Rosa Parks Elementary
Mark Scheidel	MnDOT – Mankato
Melissa Sonnek	Region Nine Development Commission
Danielle Walchuk	Region Nine Development Commission

Brief Overview and Agenda of Meeting

SRTS meeting was held to obtain input on the proposed action steps and strategies. The SRTS team came prepared to discuss and prioritize the recommendations. Region Nine updated the draft recommendation based on discussion held at the meeting.

Safe Routes to School Team Meeting 3

Monday January 7th at 2:00pm

Le Sueur Room

1. Leadership meeting review
 - a. Identifying safe walking routes
2. Improvements handout
3. District wide neighborhood meeting
 - a. Participation on planning committee
 - b. Selection of date – Tuesday February 26th 6:00pm – 7:30pm
 - c. School district promotion of event
 - i. Bike giveaway?
4. February application
5. Next meeting
 - a. Leadership meeting January 11th

- b. Safe routes to school team?

Meeting Conclusion

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:20pm. Participants will submit their responses for:

- ❖ Feedback on projected safe routes
- ❖ Feedback on potential improvements list

APPENDIX 4: Safe Routes to School Subcommittee Meeting

Friday January 11th, 2013 at 1:15pm

Blue Earth River Room

Name	Representing
Ronda Allis	Region Nine Development Commission
Mark Anderson	City of Mankato
Landon Bode	City of Mankato
Kurt Klinder	City of Mankato
Joe Meixl	Mankato Area Public Schools
Melissa Sonnek	Region Nine Development Commission
Danielle Walchuk	Region Nine Development Commission

Agenda

1. Final review of suggested improvements list
2. Final review of student safe travel routes
3. Review Kurt's maps
4. Discuss neighborhood meeting
5. Receive update from Joe Meixl on progress with six principals
6. Discuss February application deadline

Summary

The final list of improvements was reviewed and will be finalized with all additional suggestions by Friday January 18th. The list was made available to anyone in the SRTS group by placing it into an online drop box system allowing for unlimited views and edits.

The committee reviewed Kurt Klinder's maps showing safe walking routes, traffic patterns, area signage, etc. making additional comments along the way. We plan on presenting these maps to parents and members of the community at the neighborhood meeting.

The neighborhood meeting is still in the planning process, we have a developing PowerPoint and agenda as well as documents to present to each specific group. The group discussed where to hold the neighborhood meeting.

Joe Meixl explained where each of the principals stand on the improvements. We are counting on the approval of each of the school principals for each non-infrastructure improvement as well as approval from the district superintendent.

APPENDIX 5: Review of Safe Routes to School Draft Plan

Name	Representing
Ronda Allis	Region Nine Development Commission
Landon Bode	City of Mankato
Linda Engstrom	Greater Mankato Bike/Walk Advocate
Kurt Klinder	City of Mankato
Joe Meixl	Mankato Area Public Schools
Mark Scheidel	MnDOT – Mankato
Danielle Walchuk	Region Nine Development Commission
Matt Westermayer	City of Mankato

Brief Overview of Meeting and Agenda

The purpose of this meeting was to seek for inputs from stakeholders in the draft SRTS plan. Stakeholders present at this meeting provided edits and comments that were to improve on the plan's quality. The meeting was started at approximately 1:00 p.m. by Ronda Allis who provided a brief insight into a new tool on MnDOT's website -interactive program finder- designed to help people find implementable SRTS programs specific to each of the Five E's. The items on the agenda included the following:

1. Providing insights to stakeholders on "Interactive Program Finder"
2. Webinar (April 25, 2013) on development of walking/biking maps for schools
3. Webinar (May 8, 2013) on encouragement programs
4. Other matters (Local Projects Being Funded)
5. SRTS Plan Review

Key Issues Discussed

1. *EDITS:*

- ❖ It was suggested that "Kennedy Neighborhood Unknown" in the table of contents should be replaced with "insufficient data".
- ❖ The introduction section was to be improved by adding more background notes on what is SRTS.

- ❖ On page 10, the lists of grade level entry doors was deleted to ensure consistency
- ❖ Page 24, "with only a small center median" was deleted.
- ❖ Page 28, "Pohl Road" was changed to "Huron Drive"
- ❖ "Move 20mph school zone back to Manitou" and "adding needed sidewalk segment" to Manitou Drive were added to the last recommended projects for Kennedy Elementary.
- ❖ The remaining edits involved changing the language for some of the projects and changing or adding some institutions to the "Project Responsibility" section.
- ❖ Omitted names of members present for the SRTS meetings were added to the "Attendance Sheet" (appendices section).
- ❖ Deputy Sheriff requested for copies of the final revised version to show to their respective officers.

APPENDIX 6: Safe Routes to School Parents' Survey

Your child's school wants to learn your thoughts about children walking and biking to school. This survey will take about 5 - 10 minutes to complete.

We ask that each family complete only one survey per school your children attend. If you have more than one child in a school, please fill out the survey for the child with the next birthday from today's date.

Your responses will be kept confidential and neither your name nor your child's name will be associated with any results.

Please take a few minutes to provide us with the following information:

1. Who is completing this survey?

- ☐ Parent
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Other

2. Race of person completing the survey?

- ☐ White
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- ☐ I prefer not to answer this question
- ☐ Other (please specify)

3. What is the grade of the child who brought home this survey?

- ☐ Pre-Kindergarten
- ☐ Kindergarten
- ☐ First
- ☐ Second
- ☐ Third

- ☐ Fourth
- ☐ Fifth
- ☐ Sixth
- ☐ Seventh
- ☐ Eighth

4. Please indicate which school your student attends

- ☐ Franklin
- ☐ Jefferson
- ☐ Kennedy
- ☐ Roosevelt
- ☐ Rosa Parks
- ☐ Washington

5. Is the child who brought home this survey male or female

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

6. How many children do you have in kindergarten through 8th grade?

- ☐ One
- ☐ Two
- ☐ Three
- ☐ Four
- ☐ Five
- ☐ Six

7. What are the names of the two streets that intersect nearest your home? (Please provide the names of two intersecting streets)

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.....

8. How far does your child live from school?

- ☐ Less than 1/4 mile
- ☐ 1/4 mile up to 1/2 mile
- ☐ 1/2 mile up to 1 mile
- ☐ 1 mile up to 2 miles
- ☐ More than 2 miles
- ☐ Do not know

9. On most days, how does your child travel to school?

- ☐ Walk
- ☐ Bike
- ☐ School Bus
- ☐ Family Vehicle (Only children in your family)
- ☐ Carpool (Children from other families)
- ☐ Transit (City bus, subway, etc.)
- ☐ Other (Skateboard, scooter, inline skates, etc.)

10. On most days, how does your child travel home from school?

- ☐ Walk
- ☐ Bike
- ☐ School Bus
- ☐ Family Vehicle (Only children in your family)
- ☐ Carpool (Children from other families)
- ☐ Transit (City bus, subway, etc.)

☐ Other (Skateboard, scooter, inline skates, etc.)

11. How long does it normally take your child to get to school?

☐ Less than 5 minutes

☐ 5-10 minutes

☐ 11-20 minutes

☐ More than 20 minutes

☐ Don't know/Not sure

12. How long does it normally take your child to get home from school?

☐ Less than 5 minutes

☐ 5-10 minutes

☐ 11-20 minutes

☐ More than 20 minutes

☐ Don't know/Not sure

13. Has your child asked for your permission to walk or bike to/from school in the last year?

☐ Yes

☐ No

14. How much fun is walking or biking to/from school for your child?

☐ Very fun

☐ Fun

☐ Neutral

☐ Boring

☐ Very boring

15. How healthy is walking or biking to/from school for your child?

☐ Very healthy

☐ Healthy

- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Unhealthy
- ☐ Very Unhealthy

16. What is the highest grade or year of school you completed?

- ☐ Grades 1 through 8 (Elementary)
- ☐ Grades 9 through 11 (Some highschool)
- ☐ Grade 12 or GED (High school graduate)
- ☐ College 1 to 3 years (Some college or technical school)
- ☐ College 4 years or more (College graduate)
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

17. What of the following issues affected your decision to allow, or not allow, your child to walk or bike to/from school? (Select ALL that apply)

- ☐ Distance
- ☐ Convenience of driving
- ☐ Time
- ☐ Child's before or after-school activities
- ☐ Speed of traffic along route
- ☐ Amount of traffic along route
- ☐ No Adults to walk or bike with
- ☐ Sidewalks or pathways
- ☐ Safety of intersections and crossings
- ☐ No Crossing guards
- ☐ Violence or crime
- ☐ Weather/climate

18. Would you probably let your child walk or bike to/from school if this problem were changed or improved? (Select one choice per line)

	My child already walks or bikes to/from school	Yes	No	Not Sure
Distance				
Convenience of driving				
Time				
Child's before or after-school activities				
Speed of traffic along route				
Amount of traffic along route				
Adults to walk or bike with				
Sidewalks or pathways				
Safety of intersections and crossings				
Crossing guards				
Violence or crime				
Weather or climate				

19. In your opinion, how much does your child's school encourage or discourage walking and biking to/from school?

- () Strongly encourages
- () Encourages
- () Neither
- () Discourages
- () Strongly discourages

20. Do you feel there is adequate bike storage facilities at your school?

- () Completely Satisfied
- () Somewhat Satisfied
- () Somewhat Dissatisfied
- () Completely Dissatisfied
- () Do Not Know

21. If your child were able to walk/bike to and from school with a partner, would they be more willing to walk/bike to school?

- () Yes
- () No
- () Do not know

22. What is the single most important barrier preventing your child from walking or biking to school?

.....

.....

23. What is the furthest distance your child is willing to walk/bike to or from school?

	Walk	Bike
Less than 5 minutes		
5-10 minutes		
11-20 minutes		
More than 20 minutes		
minutes		

24. Please provide any additional comments below

.....

.....

.....

.....

APPENDIX 7: Details of the SRTS Strategies

“Five E’s” Area	Strategy	Details
Education and Encouragement Strategies	Bicycle Rodeo and Safety Course	These activities can be used to teach on-bike skills, safety tips, and bicycle and automobile traffic laws. A Bike Rodeo is usually a bicycle safety clinic featuring bike safety inspections (and optionally quick tune-ups), and a safety lecture about the rules of the road (usually 10 to 15 minutes). While these activities can and should be held on school grounds, the community and school district should work together to take these events out into the community, as well, by hosting occasional Bicycle Rodeos at town parks.
	Frequent Walker/Biker Card	In the frequent walker/biker card program, students are usually issued tally cards to win points for walking, biking, carpooling, and busing. Every time they walk or bike to school they earn two punches. Every time they carpool or take the bus they earn one punch. When they earn a pre-determined number of points, students turn in their card for a small prize and receive another card. At the end of the contest, a raffle could be held using all of the completed tally cards for major prizes. Local businesses could be contacted and asked to donate prizes.
	Classroom Activities	Any number of activities that teach about the importance and benefits of biking and walking could be incorporated into class curricula of the school-day structure. Just a few ideas are discussed below: i. Incorporate biking and walking into physical education curriculum- this strategy involves the school district purchasing a fleet of vehicles for use by students as part of their physical education curriculum. Safety, traffic laws/rules of the road, and fitness can all be covered in such courses. ii. Walk and bike across America- this initiative allows students to gain a broader perspective on the freedom provided by walking and biking. Students keep track of the distance that they walk and bike to school by calculating how far they live from school and multiplying the number of one-way biking and walking trips. Each week at a designated time, the students add up the distance that the whole class traveled during the week and plot it on a map. Then they “travel” to a destination chosen by the class within those miles. Students become aware that they can travel great distances by bike or on foot. As the class continues to accumulate miles, they can research new destinations around the country. At the end of a designated time, the class that has traveled the farthest gets a special reward, such as a movie or pizza party. In variation on this contest, carpools and bus passengers can be included by adding bonus miles for every child who uses these modes. Note that students using motorized transportation can travel farther than those going on their own power. To include

“Five E’s” Area	Strategy	Details
		<p>the actual miles would defeat the purpose of the exercise. Add one mile to the class total for every child who carpools or rides the bus to school.</p> <p>iii. Art contests- Art contests provide children the opportunity to develop safety slogans and art while learning about better safety practices. Their artwork can then be used as signs or banners as part of a community wide safety campaign.</p> <p>iv. Essay Contests- essay and creative writing contests give students an opportunity to address how transportation affects their community and the environment.</p> <p>v. Walking Wednesdays- Walking Wednesdays programs participants meet with school staff at a public location such as a park near the school at a pre-determined time, the students and the staff walk together to school one day a week.</p> <p>vi. Stagger dismissal times- staggering dismissal times for walkers/bikers, bus riders, and family vehicle riders can be an effective solution to separate transportation modes. By adjusting dismissal time by 5 minutes, schools with limited space to separate transportation modes can alleviate some of the safety and congestion challenges common around dismissal time.</p> <p>vii. Walking Math- Walking math offers lesson plans that link math with walking. For example, students can calculate gas mileage, auto emissions, and compare the miles per gallon (MPG) for different vehicles.</p>
	Walk to School and Bike to School Day	Occurring each October, the international bike to school day can be used to kick off a new SRTS program or as a highlight of the year for an existing program. The international walk to school day organization creates many media opportunities and can be useful for a community to use as a springboard for its own Walk to School day.
	Walking School Bus and Bicycle Train	These programs are volunteer-based programs where a parent or other trusted adult volunteers to walk or bike a set routes, picking up school children along the way and walking/biking with them to the school grounds. Another adult will pick up the children at the school grounds and walk/bike them home after school. The town should consider encouraging the use of town parks as “park and walk/park and bike” drop off/pick up points for students who live farther away from the school.
	Assemblies and Guest Speakers	Guest speakers can address bicycle and pedestrian safety, health benefits of biking and walking, opportunities for joining clubs and more. This activity could happen as a part of a field day, a special assembly or even in lieu of a class trip.

“Five E’s” Area	Strategy	Details
Enforcement Strategies	Additional Crosswalks and Signage	Crosswalks define the area of the street where automobile drivers can expect to see pedestrians. For crosswalks adjacent to the school grounds, it is suggested that a “ladder crosswalk” be considered to increase visibility.
	Speed Monitoring Devices/Speed Trailers	Small, portable speed trailers can be placed in key locations periodically to provide instant feedback to motorists regarding their current speed. The trailers have proven effective at reducing speeds at least on a temporary basis. Use of the trailers in school zones at the beginning of the school year may remind drivers to slow down. The town could explore the possibility of using speed monitoring devices of neighboring law enforcement agencies if cost is a concern. Another option is the instillation of signs that are permanently mounted near schools to make drivers aware of their current speed. They flash when a motorist is exceeding the posted speed limit.
Engineering Strategies	Complete/Connect Sidewalk Network in Critical Student Travel Areas	A complete sidewalk network is one of the most important tools for SRTS programs. Sidewalks provide a safe place for student to walk and a complete network makes safe routes from home to school and back possible.
	Install Bike Lanes Along Primary Student Travel Routes	Bike lanes are at least 3 feet wide lanes located at the right edge of motor vehicle travel lanes on a street. They are defined by a 4 inch white line and help to communicate to bikers and drivers how a road functions. For greatest visibility and success, additional pavement markings and signage should be used to identify on-street bike lanes.
	Restricting Turning Movements	Particular restrictions such as only allowing right turns out of or into school properties, (commonly called “right in, right out” access) can help alleviate congestion and queuing (traffic stacking) in some locations.
	Install Traffic Calming Measures	Traffic calming measures (curb extensions, speed tables, traffic circles, raised crosswalks, narrow lanes, etc.) have become more popular in recent years and the engineering behind them has also improved. Studies have shown that well designed traffic calming measures can reduce speeds considerably.
Evaluation Strategies	Establish a Standing Safe Routes to School Task Force	The town and school district were successful in bringing together a diverse group of dedicated citizens, officials, and educational professionals for the development of this plan. Upon plan adoption, the town should seek the commitment of as many of these individuals as possible – as well as any additional stakeholders (for example, a student member) – for a standing committee that meets periodically throughout the year to review and refine the SRTS program in the town.
	Survey Parents	Using the parent survey developed for this plan, parents should be surveyed once or twice per

“Five E’s” Area	Strategy	Details
		year in order to evaluate how perceptions of walking and biking have changed over time. The school district can coordinate the distribution and collection of surveys to schools, and results can be sent to the National Center for Safe Routes to School for tabulation and analysis if the district feels it is unable to do so.
	Survey Students	Using the student tally developed by the National Center for Safe Routes to School teachers at each school should record their students’ methods of travel to and from school for at least one week in the fall and one week in the spring each year. Once again, results can be sent to the National Center for Safe Routes to School for tabulation and analysis if the district feels it is unable to do so.
	Complete Walking and Biking Audits	An audit of the environment around every elementary and middle school should be completed once a year to evaluate the effectiveness of safety initiatives. The audit will focus on a 2 mile radius around each school, and will review facilities on and near school grounds from sidewalks to bicycle racks and entrances. Auditors will also evaluate car, bus, and bicycle/pedestrian traffic circulation around the schools during drop off and pick up times. Using the same tools as were used to conduct audits for the planning process, the town will provide materials and training to parents for auditing schools.
	Conduct Periodic Traffic Counts	The town should conduct traffic counts – including pedestrian traffic during peak school hours – on a periodic basis to observe trends and changes in travel behavior over time.
	Review and Revise SRTS Plan	Understanding that this plan is created at a specific moment in time, the SRTS task force should review the plan periodically. Times, conditions, attitudes, and desires all will certainly change over time, so this plan should be revisited in the context of those changes to assure that it remains useful and valid. A thorough review and restating of priorities and actions should occur at least every 5 years.



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